

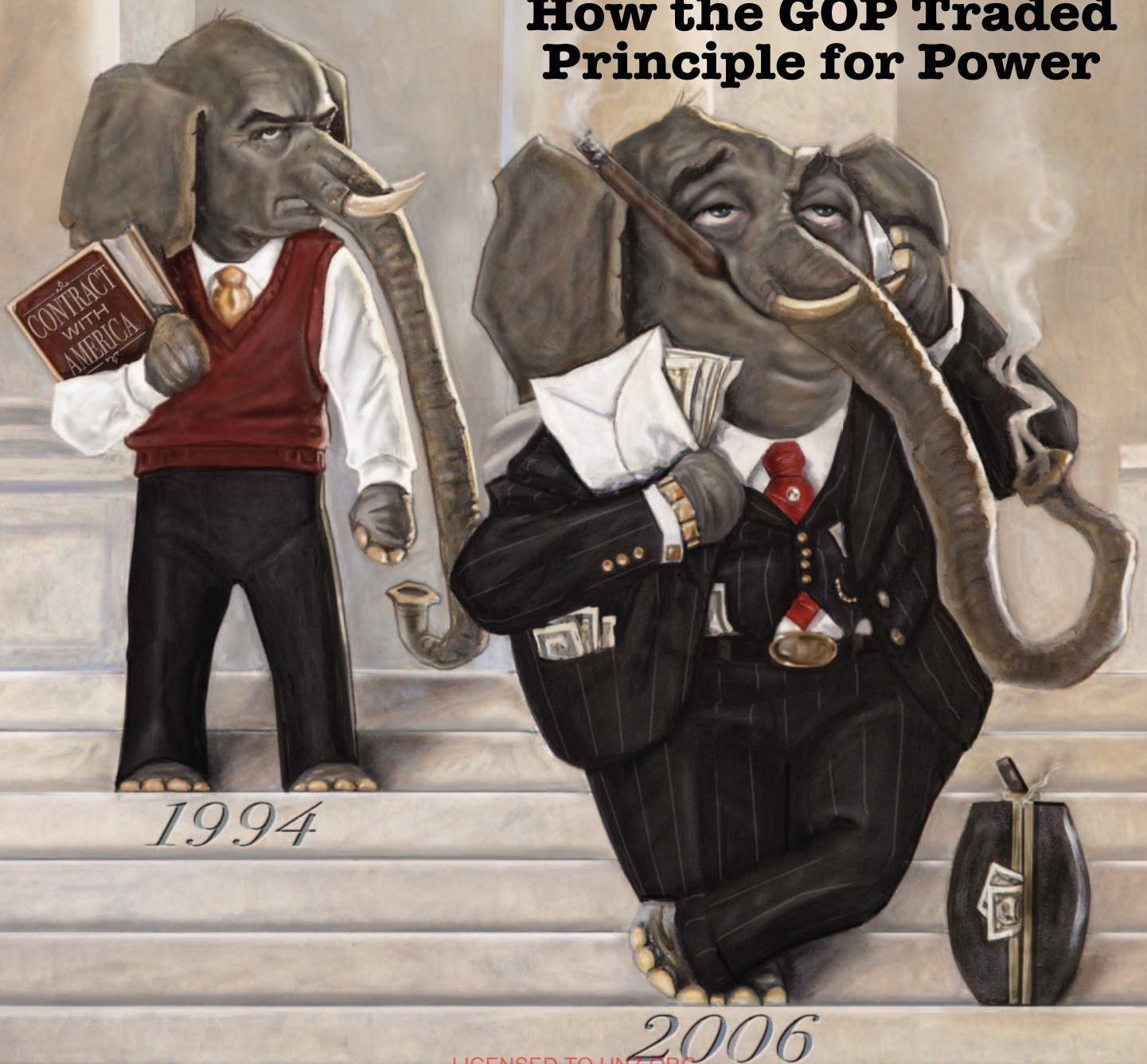
GREENSPAN'S PUNCHBOWL ■ MARCHING TOWARD TEHRAN

FEBRUARY 13, 2006

The American Conservative

REPUBLIC FOR SALE

How the GOP Traded Principle for Power



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TAC to Standard — Challenge Accepted

In the run-up to war in Iraq, *The Weekly Standard* was the voice of the “cakewalk” crowd clamoring for “Action This Day!” Cawing and cawing, in the end they got, and we got, the war they had craved.

No voice in America was more resolute that the war would be an historic blunder than ours. From our first issue in 2002 until the 3rd Division stepped off, we warned this was an unnecessary war. Though Saddam was a monster, we said, he was no threat to us. But a U.S. invasion would radicalize Islam, increase terror, and leave our troops mired down in a nation whose people would come to hate us. We scoffed at the utopian blather about democracy breaking out as propagandistic nonsense.

Enraged, *National Review* read us out of the movement. In a cover story, “Unpatriotic Conservatives,” *NR* charged three editors and four of our writers with harboring a treasonous desire for a U.S. defeat. Said *NR*, all seven of us “hate” President Bush and “hate” America. A year later, William F. Buckley Jr. conceded that, had he known what he later learned, he, too, would have opposed the war.

History has proven us right. But the question on the table now is the one raised in the lead editorial of the Jan. 23 *Standard*, “And Now Iran.” The *Standard* calls on President Bush “to prepare for various forms of military action” to smash Iran’s nuclear program. For the *Standard* believes that containment and deterrence will not work with Iran.

Harkening back to that most terrifying moment of the Cold War, the *Standard* raises the specter of 1962. “A Cuban missile crisis with Khrushchev’s Soviet Union was bad enough. Are we willing to risk it with Ahmadinejad’s Iran?”

But this is absurd. America has thousands of nuclear warheads we could put on Iran and hundreds of rockets and bombers to deliver them. There is no evidence Iran even has the ability to build a bomb. To equate our situation with a missile crisis where Soviet rockets with atomic warheads were within hours of going operational is neocon scare-mongering.

“Advocates of containment and deterrence should step forward to make their case openly and honestly,” says the *Standard*, “We look forward to engaging them in a real debate.”

Fine, we accept.

Is the Iranian nuclear program “near the point of no return,” as the *Standard* implies? Mohamed ElBaradei of the IAEA has told *Newsweek*: “There is no clear and present danger.” And while the seals have been broken at the 164-centrifuge pilot

plant at Natanz, Iran’s foreign ministry has said “fuel production” has not even begun.

Do we know different? Con Coughlin, the defense expert at the *Daily Telegraph*, writes that even if Iran begins to enrich, it will be three years before they have enough fissile material for a single bomb. Israel has hundreds, we have thousands of bombs.

But if the “military option” is a preventive war on Iraq, let us, at least this time, consider beforehand the costs and consequences. With its cruise-missile and smart-bomb bins refilled, the U.S. could effect the nuclear castration of the mullahs in 48 hours. The Iranian air force and navy would be an afternoon’s work. But all of Iran’s Shahab missiles would likely be fired at U.S. bases and Israel, to the delight of the Arab and Islamic street, widening the war.

And how might Tehran respond? Iranian volunteers pouring into Iraq inciting the Shia to attack U.S. troops. The Green Zone turned into Fort Apache. A debacle, unless we send in more troops. Iranian oil exports halted. Terror attacks on U.S. installations and Gulf allies. Silkworm missiles fired at tankers. Oil at \$100-\$200 a barrel. A worldwide depression. That’s for openers.

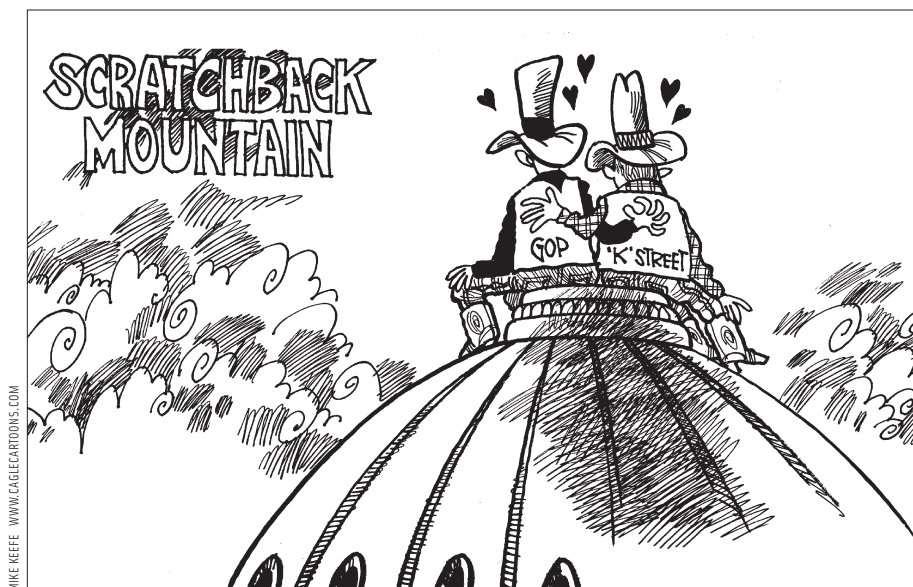
In an all-out war, Iran could break apart. If so, we will multiply the ranks of terrorists hell-bent on getting their hands on a nuclear weapon, perhaps from Pakistan, and using it on us.

With our Army tied down and taking losses in Afghanistan and Iraq and Pakistanis demanding we be thrown out of their country, do we really need another war against a nation four times the size of Iraq? One bullet fired at Musharraf, another at Karzai, and the U.S. position in the Pakistani-Afghan region could collapse overnight.

Conservatives must raise the ever-relevant question: *Cui bono*? Who would benefit from a U.S. war with Iran? Who is prodding us into it? Are they looking out for America first?

Conservatives will demand that Congress, this time, debate, and, if we are going to war, declare war. That would force us to focus on what the real threat is and whether we cannot find some accommodation with these people, as we did with Stalin, Mao, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev.

We never fought Russia and we need not fight Iran, unless they start the fight. —Patrick J. Buchanan for the Editors



[COVER]

Republic for Sale

BY DOUG BANDOW As long as government dispenses trillions in spoils, high-power lobbying is here to stay. Page 6

[IDEAS]

Americans First

BY STEVE SAILER In devising immigration policy, the question should be: what's best for the citizens we already have? Page 12

[ECONOMICS]

Eat, Drink, and Buy Merrily

BY BILL BONNER Celebrated Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan's true legacy is one of debt and fiscal deceit. His successor aims to follow. Page 15

[CULTURE]

Lumpen Leisure

BY JAMES HOWARD KUNTLER Last days of the cheap-oil carnival Page 20

COLUMNS

2 Patrick J. Buchanan: *The Weekly Standard* wants another war.

11 Leon Hadar: Sharon's stroke reschedules the world.

35 Taki: A night out with the Kennedys

NEWS & VIEWS

4 Fourteen Days: Trying Alito; A Trillion Here, A Trillion There; Where Have All the Cowboys Gone?

27 Deep Background: London Bomber's Legitimate Money; Fish and Chips and Terror; Cornered Syria

ARTICLES

9 W. James Antle III: The Senate gives amnesty another chance.

17 Arthur Versluis: Globalism's local toll

25 Wayne Madsen: Neocons set their sights on Tehran.

ARTS & LETTERS

28 Steve Sailer: Jerry Bruckheimer's "Glory Road"

29 Leon Hadar: *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* by Robert Dreyfuss

31 Peter J. Lynch: *The Untied States of America: Polarization, Fracturing, and Our Future* by Juan Enriquez

33 Chip Pitts: *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis* by Jimmy Carter

[JUSTICE]

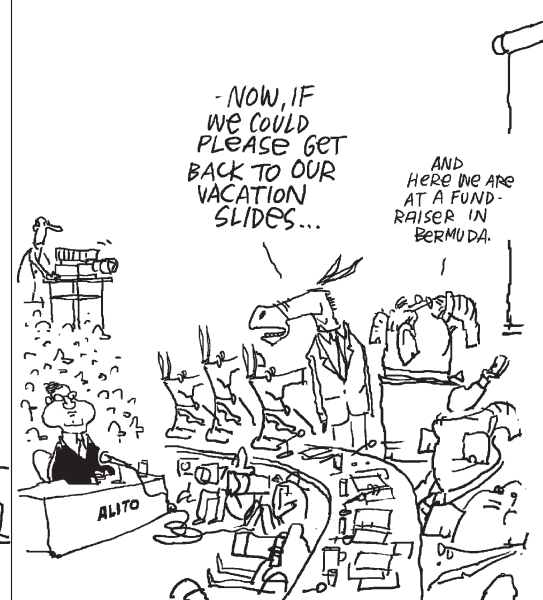
LEFT BEHIND

The Alito hearings may not have revealed how the judge would rule on the Supreme Court, but they certainly clarified why the Democrats have lost five of the last seven and seven of the last ten presidential elections. Democratic senators gave a stunning demonstration of how far their party has strayed from mainstream America on the key social issues of the past generation.

First up, abortion. Viewers couldn't miss Charles Schumer's barely suppressed rage as he tried to smoke out Alito's pro-life views. The New York senator gave every impression of thinking that a belief in the sanctity of life—a view held in various degrees by substantial majorities of the American people—was something ugly and disreputable.

Second issue, racial quotas. This was the subtext of the probe into the Concerned Alumni of Princeton, a heretofore obscure group that a generation ago opposed (among other things) affirmative action and racial quotas in Princeton admissions. The Democratic senators seem convinced that if Alito's involvement with the group was significant (it turned out not to be) that would demonstrate to the country the judge was some sort of racist. Today's Democrats don't realize—as the architects of America's 1960s-era civil-rights laws did—that opposition to racial quotas is not a form of racism. It is, rather, a belief in the use of equal standards for all Americans, regardless of race.

In the mental universe of today's liberals, anything short of abortion on demand is akin to fascism, and a failure to back race-based quotas makes one a bigot. But wherever the middle-ground sentiment of the country is on these subjects, it is certainly not the territory the Democrats are defending. And yet, out of habit, like a labor party unable to imagine taking nationalization of the



MIKE LESTER WWW.CAGLECARTOONS.COM

means of production out of its platform, it is the position the Democrats embrace. If the day were to come when Democrats showed themselves receptive to entertaining differences of opinion on these matters, they would once again compete on a level playing field for national office. Until then, no matter how badly the Republicans rule, Democratic candidates will be running uphill.

[DIPLOMACY]

BODY OF EVIDENCE

Shortly after 9/11, President Bush announced, "If you harbor terrorists, you are a terrorist." But what about harboring a terrorist's body? Michael Ledeen, who was gunning for war with Iran while the rest of the neocons were working their magic on Iraq, writes at National Review Online, "[A]ccording to Iranians I trust, Osama bin Laden finally departed this world in mid-December. The al Qaeda leader died of kidney failure and was buried in Iran, where he had spent most of his time since the destruction of al Qaeda in Afghanistan."

Smell the set-up? If the War Party learned anything from Iraq, it's not that the enterprise was misbegotten but that it's wise to make your *casus belli* multiple-choice. That way, if a nuclear threat and ranting leader don't tip the balance, there's always that al-Qaeda tie-in—however cold.

And don't think Ledeen & Co. will be constrained by car bombs in Baghdad or the tedium of advance planning. The occupant of the Freedom Chair at AEI—we can't make these things up—concludes his battle cry: "[B]oth demography and geopolitics make this an age of revolution, as President Bush seems to have understood. ... Faster. Please?"

[POLITICS]

JOBS BOEHNER SHOULDN'T DO

While Washington is buzzing about who will succeed Tom DeLay, it's not easy to find dividing lines in a House Republican leadership contest between three candidates with nearly identical voting records. Missouri's Roy Blunt, Ohio's John Boehner, and Arizona's John Shadegg all present themselves as government-cutters and political reformers; Shadegg in particular seeks to appeal to the House's staunchest conservatives. There's one area to watch for a real difference between the three amigos—who is toughest on illegal immigration?

Boehner is one of just 17 Republicans who voted against the strong border-security bill that passed the House in December. Blunt guided negotiations between the leadership and the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, winning Tom Tancredo's endorsement in the leadership race. Other immigration reformers

may be drawn to Shadegg, who boasts strong ratings from restrictionist groups like Americans for Better Immigration. Boehner claims to agree with most of the House immigration-reform bill's provisions but voted no because it contained "massive government mandates on the private sector" to help employers weed out illegal hires—though giving businesses a pass makes meaningful immigration enforcement impossible.

Immigration may signal a larger debate between cultural conservatives and reflexively pro-business Republicans. The House GOP should remember that confusing contributors' interests with the national interest helped create their leadership crisis in the first place.

[RACE]

DAMNED IF YOU DO

Look to London for the dawning of a virgin frontier of racial "discrimination" litigation. Sgt. Leslie Turner, a black police officer, has successfully sued the Metropolitan Police for "over-promoting" him due to affirmative action. His lawyers argued that he received the prestigious job of protecting the Duchess of Cornwall (Camilla) because he was black. But within four months, he was re-assigned. His lawyer claimed he hadn't received sufficient training and support, which caused him to make mistakes.

The phenomenon is common enough in the United States, where a vast web of set-asides and quotas—all under the litigious eye of various affirmative-action bureaucracies—often result in hirings and promotions that are anything but merit-driven. When race-based personnel practices produce a mismatch between the applicant and the job, there is discomfort all around. But what a boondoggle for the lawyers: affirmative-action beneficiaries will now be able to sue not only for being passed over but for being hired and promoted as well!

[WAR]

\$2 TRILLION AND COUNTING

On Sept. 15, 2002, White House economic advisor Lawrence Lindsey estimated the high end of the cost of the Iraq War at \$100-\$200 billion. An administration trying to sell a cakewalk dismissed his analysis as "likely very, very high" and promptly fired him.

Now it turns out that Lindsey may have deserved his pink slip: his figures were wildly off the mark. Wildly low. According to a report by Joseph Stiglitz—a Columbia professor and Nobel Prize winner—and Linda Bilmes—a Harvard budget expert—the war is likely to cost up to \$2 trillion. They argue that expenditures like longtime care for the survivors of major injuries have been severely underestimated.

Congress has appropriated \$251 billion, and the Congressional Budget Office forecasts another \$230 billion in Iraq-related outlays. Whether the CBO or Stiglitz and Bilmes are closer to the mark remains to be seen. What is certain is that before hiring him to run the World Bank, someone should have recalled Paul Wolfowitz's prediction that Iraq would fund the operation itself.

[CULTURE]

JOHN & WAYNE?

If Hollywood had its way, "Brokeback Mountain" would be mandatory viewing. The film about a love affair between two gay cowboys won critical accolades and took home three Golden Globe Awards. Director Ang Lee praised it as an example of "the power of movies to change the way we're thinking."

Or not. "Brokeback Mountain" has, as the *New York Times* gently reported, "met some resistance in the broader public." Translation: it bombed, playing in just 683 theaters and earning \$30.8 million. "The Passion of the Christ," by contrast, took in \$414 million. Consciousness-raisers, back to the drawing board. ■

The American Conservative

Founding Editor
Taki Theodoracopoulos

Editor and Publisher
Scott McConnell

Executive Editor

Kara Hopkins

Literary Editor

Daniel McCarthy

Senior Writer

W. James Antle III

Film Critic

Steve Sailer

Contributing Editors

Andrew J. Bacevich, Doug Bandow, Richard Cummings, Michael Desch, Philip Giraldi, Paul Gottfried, Leon Hadar, Peter Hitchens, Christopher Layne, Eric S. Margolis, James P. Pinkerton, Justin Raimondo, Fred Reed, R.J. Stove, Thomas E. Woods Jr., John Zmirak

Art Director

Mark Graef

Associate Publisher

Jon Basil Utley

Publishing Consultant

Ronald E. Burr

Office Manager

Veronica Yanos

Copy Assistant

John W. Greene

Editor Emeritus

Patrick J. Buchanan

The American Conservative, Vol. 5, No. 3, February 13, 2006 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries—

By phone: **800-579-6148**

(outside the U.S./Canada 856-380-4131)

Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue and all subscription transactions.

Inquiries and letters to the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales or editorial call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on January 19, 2006.

Copyright 2006 *The American Conservative*.

[power corrupts]

Republic for Sale

Is Leviathan less injurious just because the GOP feeds him?

By Doug Bandow

DESPITE MOUNTING POLICY setbacks and declining public support, until recently the Republican Party stood triumphant. President George W. Bush was re-elected. The GOP strengthened its control of Capitol Hill. From Fox News to Rush Limbaugh, Republicans gained major media beachheads. Moreover, the GOP has been asserting control over other organs of influence, including Washington's fabled "K Street," or lobbying sector.

In fact, the latter reflects a conscious strategy of increasing the Republican presence among lobbyists, commonly termed the "K Street Project." The *Washington Post* reported in June 2003 that "a decade after Republicans launched a campaign to oust Democrats from top lobbying jobs in Washington" the GOP had largely succeeded, having "seized a significant number of the most influential positions at trade associations and corporate government affairs offices—and reaping big financial rewards."

This was no mean achievement, since 40 years of Democratic congressional control spawned a generation of Democratic lobbyists. But this success might end up being a Pyrrhic victory. In the midst of the growing web of allegations surrounding Jack Abramoff, Republicans now fear losing control of Congress in the midterm elections.

The impact of the Abramoff saga has spread beyond Congress. Even yours

truly has ended up as a bit player, having been paid by Abramoff to write occasionally about issues of mutual interest. Although I didn't change my views, it was a bad judgment for which I've taken a well-earned professional hit.

Despite the frenzy now evident in Washington, in important ways *l'affaire* Abramoff appears to be overblown. Abramoff's activities were unseemly, even salacious. His fees were breathtaking. His treatment of his clients was at best denigrating and at worst fraudulent. His relationships with nonprofits and charities broke new ground. But there appears to have been no bribery as commonly understood, no bags of money transferred to policymakers.

The Bush administration, for all of its manifold failings, is not the Grant administration. There appears to be no Teapot Dome oil reserve buried beneath the Mariana Islands. No one offered congressmen cash for legislation *à la* the Abscam scandal. If legislators did trade official acts for Abramoff's favors, they really didn't get that much in return—a Scottish golf vacation? Although the Abramoff affair deserves denunciation in the court of public opinion, it is less clear that many people will be convicted in the court of law.

The scandal's greater significance is what it tells us about Washington and the GOP. The picture isn't pretty, but the tale isn't new. The federal Leviathan is

far too big, encouraging, even necessitating, an expansive K Street. And the Republicans, with few exceptions, care far more about being re-elected than about implementing their professed principles.

For years, lobbyists have been viewed as disreputable—not as bad as prostitutes perhaps, but, especially since many are lawyers, engaged in work that most parents won't mention to their friends. Lobbying exists for a simple reason, however: the First Amendment protects the right of people to advocate their cause before government. Petitioning officeholders once elected is as important as electing them in the first place.

If government didn't do much, there wouldn't be much to lobby about. Peggy Noonan blames abuses in part on the fact that big government "is run by a lot of people who are not angels" who "together and in the aggregate, do much mischief." But that's not the critical issue. After all, lobbyists target officials good and bad. Indeed, the more honest the policymaker, the greater the effort required to make him do the "right" thing.

It is power that, as Lord Acton famously warned, is truly corrupting. Today Washington disposes of \$2.6 trillion annually. It taxes nearly as much. Regulations cost almost another trillion dollars a year. Virtually no aspect of

American life—how much you are paid, where you live, what food labels say, the tax records you must keep, what you can put in your mailbox, what you can do with your property, what kind of benefits you must pay employees, and much, much more—is affected, if not determined, by Washington.

Americans for Tax Reform figures that Cost of Government Day fell, ironically enough, on July 4 last year. All told, Americans worked 83.4 days to pay Uncle Sam's bills. They spent 42.2 days laboring for state and local officials. Federal regulations consumed the fruit of another 36.2 days of work. State and local rules soaked up 22.2 more days.

The way government power is exercised also plays a role. Much in Congress happens behind closed doors, at midnight, dictated by a small leadership clique. Members almost never read the bills upon which they are voting and rarely even know many of the legislation's details. Moreover, with the explosion of administrative delegation, many decisions are made by unelected officials deep within large bureaucracies—themselves often formally independent of presidential control. Only a professional can hope to monitor and influence such a process.

Of course, the early national government possessed enough power and resources to make it worth the attention of business and other interests. Daniel Webster, one of the Senate's giants, doubled as a paid lobbyist. But most Americans lived without worrying too much about what Uncle Sam was up to. Yes, the Teapot Dome oil reserve was worth exploiting. But Congress was not then standing ready to regulate and tax the oil companies, micromanage auto-fuel economy, determine industry safety standards, and set a myriad of employment, health, and wage conditions.

Organized lobbying became more prominent in the aftermath of the New

Deal and World War II as Leviathan truly arose. Now Washington is flooded with people attempting to influence how federal power is exercised.

The Cato Institute's David Boaz reports that the number of registered lobbying firms jumped from 1701 to 2060 in the last six years; over the same period, lobbyist spending went up 50 percent, and the number of companies with lobbyists rose 58 percent. The number of lobbyists in the nation's capital approaches 35,000, double the number in 2000. Even more stunning, the number of firms with DC offices jumped tenfold between 1961 and 1982.

It isn't just ideological libertarians who see the connection between government power and K Street. Jan Witold Baran, former general counsel of the Republican National Committee, observes, "The size of the lobbyist population is proportional to the size of government." Todd Purdum of *Vanity Fair* notes that the "astounding growth of the lobbying industry ... has tracked the growth of the federal government itself."

Thus, more and more active lobbyists are a sign of government power, not of public corruption. Of course, if you generally believe in the efficacy of bureaucratic federal rule, then you might see no need for lobbyists. But there is no reason to believe, *a priori*, that government is going to get it right. To the contrary, the rule of concentrated benefits and diffuse costs, expounded by the public choice school of economics, as well as the simple problem of letting some people squander other people's money and lives, gives much reason to believe that government will more often get it wrong.

When it does, or, more accurately, when people perceive that it does, it is important that they be able to organize politically, write critically, give campaign contributions, and employ lobbyists. There's nothing nefarious about any

of this. Some groups organize to steal from their neighbors. Other groups organize to stop competitors from stealing from them. Some organizations want the government to be their partner. Other businesses want to be left alone.

The overall process often isn't pretty. As Otto von Bismarck once noted, no one should watch his sausages or laws being made. Nor is the legislative game fair. Some groups and individuals are wealthier, more skilled, better connected. But there is no alternative in a free political system.

The second notable aspect of *l'affaire Abramoff* is how the Republican majority has lost whatever reformist fervor it had a decade ago. The GOP's transformation into Democratic clones, rather as the revolutionary pigs come to resemble the reactionary farmers in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, has long been evident. The congressional majority's calculated campaign to wring as many benefits as possible out of its relationship with K Street symbolically completes the transformation.

As Democrats spent the latter half of the 20th century pushing endless social engineering, from the New Deal to the Great Society, Republicans, seemingly a permanent legislative minority, largely fell into a strategy of "to get along, go along." The standing joke was that the Democrats could propose burning down the city, bankrupting the country, or turning everyone into serfs, and the Republicans would respond by urging that it be done responsibly, in two years rather than one—while utilizing the private sector to make the process more efficient. In short, it wasn't obvious why the Republican Party existed.

The 1994 election seemed to change everything, though, in fact, only the freshmen members of the House Republican caucus were particularly reform-minded. There was some progress at first, before legendary Washington inertia took over.

After the early, epic spending battles with President Bill Clinton, the Republican Congress restrained spending growth but made little effort to eliminate programs or reverse Leviathan's continued expansion.

At least a Democratic president gave the GOP congressional leadership a reason to oppose some presidential initiatives. George W. Bush's election demonstrated the true cost of government without opposition or accountability. The executive was as likely to push spending increases as decreases, which the dutiful Republican legislative majority was loath to deny. And the president, even if he didn't like a congressional appropriation, such as the transportation bill, was unwilling to disrupt relations by using his veto.

In most cases, however, executive and legislature cheerfully worked in tandem. Fiscal responsibility be damned, both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue wanted a Medicare drug benefit

today's unified Republican government.

The House Republicans, supposedly the party's ideological core, can't hide behind the president or Senate. Last fall, Majority Leader Tom DeLay contended that there were no more spending cuts to be had. Until proposals for increased outlays in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina reached ludicrous proportions, fiscal conservatives like Congressmen Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Mike Pence (R-Ind.) found both leadership and rank and file hostile to their advocacy of off-setting cuts.

Now talk of reform is back in the air. For instance, in running for majority leader, Congressman John Boehner (R-Ohio) presented himself as an advocate of "a vision of smaller, more accountable government." Yet a couple of years ago he declared that the revolution was over. Yes, Republicans won the presidency (1980) and Congress (1994) based on a program of cutting spending. But

voting rules to stifle the opposition, as had the previous Democratic majority.

Moreover, caution became the Republican byword, evident by the GOP's refusal to take risks on potentially generational-winning concepts such as private Social Security accounts. Particularly shocking was the increase in pork-barrel projects and special earmarks. The former, which avoid the usual budgetary and administrative scrutiny, are up sevenfold over 1998. Transportation earmarks have multiplied thirtyfold since Democrats wrote legislation during the Reagan administration.

The K Street Project, with its emphasis on seizing control of the lobbying sector, is another manifestation of this shift in focus. Some lobbyists back smaller government, but many, if not most, primarily believe in free enterprise for the other guy. Pushing for the appointment of Republicans guarantees little about the policies for which companies or associations will lobby. (Some activists, such as Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, place more emphasis on the ideological transformation of K Street.) Maybe Republicans running business groups will be more likely to support other GOP initiatives, such as cutting taxes. But lobbyists usually act in the interests of their clients, irrespective of personal party preferences.

Indeed, the congressional GOP's attempt to take over K Street looks more like divvying up the spoils than fighting for principle. In theory, of course, one could enjoy the fruits of victory while attempting to eliminate the spoils. But there's nothing to suggest that Republican legislators attempted to follow this strategy.

Rather, like Democrats before them—remember Congressman Tony Coelho?—they viewed squeezing K Street as another means of entrenching the majority, regardless what the majority

THE CONGRESSIONAL GOP'S ATTEMPT TO **TAKE OVER K STREET** LOOKS MORE LIKE **DIVVYING UP THE SPOILS** THAN FIGHTING FOR PRINCIPLE.

that upped the program's unfunded liabilities by 50 percent. It was unclear who wanted the bloated, wasteful energy bill more, Congress or the White House. The president advanced Clinton-era initiatives, such as AmeriCorps, pulling Congress along. And no matter how many pork-barrel projects or wasteful earmarks the GOP majority approved, President Bush signed the enactments into law.

Although Republicans continued to mouth platitudes about controlling spending, most had given up any pretense of attempting to protect the public purse. One had to go back to Lyndon Johnson's unified Democratic government to find a time when domestic spending went up as quickly as under

voters really didn't mean it. "Faced by electoral defeats in 1996, Republicans stopped talking about agency elimination and government cuts. It turned out that the American people did not want a major reduction of government," wrote Boehner. So instead of making a case on principle and risking electoral losses, Republicans would entrench themselves by giving the public what Boehner thought it wanted.

Thus, he joined with his GOP colleagues, and the Democrats, in spending America blind. The only difference was that Republicans preferred to rely on borrow-and-spend rather than tax-and-spend to get elected and re-elected. Republicans played the same budget games as Democrats. The GOP rigged

stood for. Back our initiatives, contribute to our campaigns, and line up support for us, whatever we do. Winning and holding a majority was the end, not the means. The chief disappointment is not that Republicans are so much worse than Democrats but that Republicans falsely claimed to be so much better.

Congressman Flake argues for “a course correction.” One surely is needed. But past attempts to make the policy game fair by re-jiggering the rules—limiting campaign contributions, for instance—merely reshuffled relative political influence. There undoubtedly are changes regarding legislative contacts and lobbyist gifts that would improve the image of Congress. They won’t improve the substance of legislation, however.

The real problem in Washington is substantive. The federal government does far too much and does much of it badly. Legislators serve too long, becoming captives to Washington and willing participants in its culture of spending. Congressional rules, by legitimizing fake emergency spending bills, allowing earmarks, and encouraging midnight legislating, reinforce the bias toward ever expanding government. The basic problem is too much and too concentrated political power.

As such, no package of lobbying reforms is likely to prevent another scandal in the future. Until government shrinks, Washington will—invariably, understandably, and even appropriately be overrun with lobbyists, which guarantees that there will be future lobbying soap operas to thrill denizens of the nation’s capital again. ■

Doug Bandow is Vice President of Policy for Citizens Outreach. A collection of his columns, Leviathan Unchained: Washington’s Bipartisan Big Government Crusade, will be published by Town Forum Press.

Reformers’ Roadblock

The Senate is where immigration control goes to die.

By W. James Antle III

WHEN THE HOUSE of Representatives decisively passed a stringent immigration-enforcement measure that included a security fence along the southwest border, Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.) exulted, “What would be the best Christmas present to the American people is pictures of concrete being poured.” Now the bill’s proponents will have to scale a different wall—a historically unreceptive Senate.

A combination of custom and entrenched procedural roadblocks to rapid legislation makes the Senate an inherently more conservative institution than the House. But ever since Republicans have controlled Washington, conservatives have found the world’s greatest deliberative body a frustrating place. From tax cuts to abortion restrictions, senators have failed to match their lower-chamber colleagues’ enthusiasm for policies favored by the Right. Conservative congressmen who move on to the Senate often lament its inaction and inertia.

None of this bodes well for immigration reform, since even many conservative senators are of the *Wall Street Journal* editorial-page variety—agreeing with Calvin Coolidge that the business of America is business, they fear a strong immigration-enforcement posture will cripple home-state employers. Political analysts expect many of the tougher sections of the House bill to be diluted or dropped entirely and there may even be a bid to add amnesty in the form of guest-worker status for at least some illegal aliens.

Immigration reformers are acutely aware of the problem. Almost immediately after the December House vote, they shifted from euphoria to guarded optimism. Veteran conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly warned, “Senators up for re-election in 2006 had better listen” to the grassroots. Restrictionist writer Juan Mann asked in VDARE, “Will America ever get to unwrap its H.R. 4437 Christmas presents? ... or will the Senate Grinches steal them first?” Minuteman founder Jim Gilchrist told me that “off the top of [his] head” he “couldn’t think of one senator” aligned with him on immigration.

This is an overstatement, but the differences between the two houses on illegal immigration are stark. The House-passed Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act contains new funds to police the border and remove illegal aliens from the workplace, without offering anything that could be reasonably construed as amnesty. In addition to the famous fence, the bill cuts funds to local governments that effectively shield illegal aliens from federal immigration laws while giving new tools to co-operative state and municipal authorities and makes illegal immigration a felony. This has been dubbed the “enforcement-only” approach.

In the Senate, on the other hand, the main immigration proposals contain elements that strengthen border and interior enforcement while inviting new guest workers and legalizing millions of illegal aliens. Backed in varying degrees

by senators ranging from Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) to Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), such bills are marketed as “enforcement plus.” The theory is that guest workers would satiate enough of the demand for cheap foreign labor to make a crackdown more practical, but the huge volume of guest-worker applicants and probable increase in illegal immigration may overwhelm any get-tough strategy—and the toughness of some of these bills’ enforcement provisions is in dispute.

A key difference is that in the House, Tancredo’s Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus commands over 90 votes. Initially, Congressman James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), the immigration-enforcement act’s chief sponsor, expressed some openness to the addition of guest workers to his bill. But the Immigration Reform Caucus decided to vote as a bloc, defeating any language

immigration. Congressman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) led the charge for a new restrictive policy in the House; then-Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) was its champion in the Senate. They received support from unlikely quarters. Many of their goals were endorsed by a Clinton-appointed immigration-reform commission, chaired by former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan (D-Texas).

In 1996, the strongest bills were defeated. There were punitive measures taken against illegal aliens as well as the curtailment of taxpayer benefits available even to legal immigrants, but no comprehensive border-security strategy ensued. Immigration levels were not cut. Instead the 1990s set records in mass immigration. Yet the Republican Congress retained the anti-immigrant tag without substantially changing the country’s policies. An activist familiar

slower to gain a foothold among senators than in the House, which is by design closer to the electorate.

But the immigration debate has changed since the 1990s in ways that even the Senate can no longer ignore. In highly affected states, the issue no longer cuts along traditional political lines. Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano recently called for a \$100 million plan to curtail illegal immigration in her state. She would punish employers, prosecute those who specialize in smuggling aliens or furnishing them with fake documents, and pay the National Guard to police the border. Napolitano is not a conservative House backbencher; she is a mainstream Democrat.

Nor is she alone. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “I would have a very difficult time supporting any guest worker bills, because most guest worker programs are magnets for illegal immigration.” This puts Feinstein to the right of the White House, but no one seems to think she is in danger of losing the Hispanic vote. Even smaller, sector-specific amnesties have stalled. Support for the agricultural workers’ AgJOBS amnesty fell 10 votes from 2004, when it had 63 cosponsors, to now, when it cannot even get to the Senate floor.

Freshman Sens. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), David Vitter (R-La.), and Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) are all veterans of the Immigration Reform Caucus and have remained amnesty opponents. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) is also to the right of his predecessor, 2004 Democratic vice-presidential nominee John Edwards, on immigration. And struggling GOP incumbents aren’t going to be eager to add amnesty to their voting records in an election year.

As the Senate takes up immigration, reformers shouldn’t pour champagne—or concrete—but neither should they surrender. ■

THE SENATE HAS NO TOM TANCREDOS AND NO COMPARABLE FACTION SINGLE-MINDEDLY DEVOTED TO IMMIGRATION CONTROL.

that even implied amnesty or guest workers. The Republican leadership decided that an enforcement-only bill was better than no bill at all.

So apparently did the Bush administration, which despite its vocal support for guest workers cautiously praised the House’s bill. But the Senate has no Tom Tancredos and no comparable faction single-mindedly devoted to immigration control. Thus the White House can still hope that when the Senate passes its version and a conference committee meets to iron out the differences, it will get something more to its liking.

It wouldn’t be the first such setback immigration reformers have endured. When the debate last swept Washington in the mid-1990s, Congress was on the verge not only of strengthening law enforcement but also reducing legal

with the debate complained, “They used our own sentiments against us to produce bills that weren’t really reform.”

Part of the problem was that immigration reformers could count on relatively few liberal votes and the Right was split. John Judis, writing in *The New Republic*, noted that these internal conservative divisions persist. He distinguished between pro-business Republicans, attuned to labor-market needs, and social conservatives, who see illegal immigration mainly as an issue relating to the integrity of the American nation-state.

In the Senate, the pro-business wing has so far had the upper hand. Elected statewide, senators need more support from business interests and are less vulnerable to Gilchrist-style third-party challenges. Immigration reform is largely backed by a populist movement and thus

Beyond Sharon

How does one explain the preoccupation of Washington officials and leading news outlets with the health of Ariel Sharon? Consider this sampling of headlines:

“Sharon Resumes Breathing, Moves Hand, Leg”; “Sharon Starts Breathing But Still Critical”; “PM’s Associates Optimistic; Say He Coughed, Moved.” Or the speculation about who will head the political party he formed, Kadima, with the media providing bios of almost every Israeli political apparatchik. And then there are the tributes, long on words and sentimental accounts of Sharon’s life story, including interviews with his high-school teachers.

Sharon’s death, we are told, could bring an end to the peace process, make it impossible to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, lead to a full-blown Middle East war, including nuclear exchanges between Israel and Iran, a devastating oil crisis, the collapse of the Global Economy, and who knows what else.

Concerns over the critically ill Sharon led Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to cancel a planned trip to Indonesia, the world’s largest Muslim nation, and to Australia, a key U.S. ally in the Pacific. Rice stayed, according to Reuters, “to liaise in Washington with President George W. Bush’s other top foreign policy aides without the problems of time differences.” She is worried that with Sharon not expected to return to politics the Bush administration’s bid to resolve the Middle East conflict might be stalled because no other Israeli official has the clout to push a settlement.

But before the White House announces the creation of a special federal agency to deal with Sharon’s health problems and CNN launches a daily news program entitled “Sharon’s Stroke: A Global Catastro-

phe,” let’s put things in perspective.

Israel is a small state with 6 million citizens and a client of the United States. Yes, it’s an important military power in a strategic part of the world. But so are Indonesia and Australia.

Moreover, there hasn’t been any peace process for a long time, and neither Sharon nor the U.S. has done much to revive it. If anything, Sharon has argued that since there was no chance of getting the Israeli-Palestinian talks restarted, his government would take unilateral steps to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and eventually parts of the West Bank.

The withdrawal from Gaza and the removal of about 9,000 Jewish settlers who lived there—it was Sharon who had helped settle them there in the first place—have been backed by more than 70 percent of Israeli voters based on cost-benefit considerations of Israeli interests. Why waste lives and resources protecting a few Jewish settlers living in the midst of a hostile Palestinian population? There was nothing really courageous about Sharon’s decision to withdraw from Gaza, and one should expect that even under the least qualified political figures, Kadima will emerge as the winner in the coming elections.

In any case, the Bushies have neither the power nor the will to take care of the mess in the Holy Land when they are drowning in the mess in Iraq and are forced to prepare for new confrontations with Iran and Syria, while pressing Egypt and Saudi Arabia to “democratize.”

Even if Sharon had continued to function as prime minister, it’s not clear how

Washington would be able to contain the rising political instability and violence in the Gaza Strip, where the moderate head of the Palestinian Authority is facing serious challenges from Hamas—thanks in part to the Bush administration’s insistence on holding elections in the Palestinian territories.

What the Bush administration is confronting in Israel/Palestine and in Iraq are the constraints on U.S. power. It hopes that by talking about “democracy” and “the peace process” and by contracting its business to Iraq’s militias or to Israel’s Sharon, it can create the impression that it’s “in charge” in Iraq and “doing something” to bring peace.

When Madeleine Albright had the nerve to suggest during a recent meeting with Bush that attacking and occupying Iraq, a fourth-rate military power, was “taking up all the energy” of the administration’s foreign-policy team—while the real threats of nuclear programs in North Korea and policies towards China and Latin America were being neglected—Bush bristled and argued that his administration “can do more than one thing at a time.”

In fact, the Bush administration doesn’t seem to be able to do more than one thing when it comes to Iraq, Israel/Palestine, and the rest of the Middle East, not to mention the rest of the world. Washington needs to recognize that it should bring in others, including the Arab states, Turkey, and Iran—not to mention the European Union, Russia, and China—to help it manage the problems of the Middle East. That’s a more important task than following Sharon’s medical condition. ■

Leon Hadar is a Cato Institute research fellow and author of Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East.

Americans First

What's best for the citizens we already have?

By Steve Sailer

AMERICANS ARE IDEALISTS. This is both one of our glories and curses because it makes us particularly vulnerable to manipulation by self-interested word-spinners. Nowhere is this more evident than in the immigration debate, where the restrictionists have most of the facts and logic on their side, but the beneficiaries of the current system have succeeded in blocking reform largely by defining themselves as the holders of the ethical high ground.

If you want to win at American politics, you need a moral theory. Fortunately, there is a concept that is both more practical and more attractive to American idealism than either liberal “multiculturalism” or neoconservative “propositionism.” I call it “citizenism” because it affirms that true patriots and idealists are willing to make sacrifices for the overall good of their fellow American citizens rather than for the advantage of either six billion foreigners or of the special interests within our own country. The notion is sensible, its appeal broad. Yet it has seldom been explicitly articulated.

Polls consistently show that the public is outraged by illegal immigration and uneasy about the high rate of legal immigration. For example, in a CBS News poll last October, 75 percent said the government was “not doing enough” to keep out illegal aliens, while 15 percent were satisfied and merely 4 percent thought efforts were too restrictive.

Yet legislative action has been limited to the middle of each decade, when Congress passes immigration “reforms” that ultimately do nothing. The 1986 compromise—an amnesty for current illegal

aliens combined with sanctions on law-breaking employers to prevent future illegal immigration—looked fair on paper, but enforcement quickly evaporated as firms complained to their congressmen. Similarly, the damp squib of 1996 legislation did nothing significant to slow the influx. Now, 2006 may well bring more of the same unless we publicize a counter-philosophy that our laws should be biased toward our own citizenry.

In our supposedly democratic system, the will of the people on immigration has been consistently thwarted because America's elites on both the Left and Right like the current lack of enforcement. A 2002 poll by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations found that 60 percent of Americans consider the present level of entry to be a “critical threat to the vital interests of the United States,” compared with only 14 percent of prominent Americans. Immigration provides corporations with cheap workers, the upper middle class with off-the-books servants, Democratic political machines with votes, and ethnic activists with careers.

How do they keep winning? The articulate and affluent who profit from illegal immigration look down their noses at anyone who wants to reduce it. They don't debate dissenters; they dismiss them. Their most effective ploy has been to insinuate that only shallow people think deeply about immigration. The more profound sort of intellect, the fashionable imply, displays an insouciant heedlessness about the long-term impact of immigration.

Yet the well-educated and well-to-do

aren't expected to subject their own children to the realities of living among the diverse. They search out homes removed by distance or doormen from concentrations of illegal aliens—although not so far that the immigrants can't come and clean their houses tax-free. As our Ascendancy of the Sensitive sees it, that their views are utterly contradicted by how they order their daily lives is proof not of their hypocrisy but of how elevated their thinking is.

This doesn't mean that the white elites view minorities as their equals. Far from it. Instead, they can't conceive of them as competition. Nobody from Chiapas is going to take *my* job. Status competition in the upper reaches of American life still largely consists of whites trying to claw their way to the top over other whites, who, as an example, make up 99 percent of the Fortune 500 CEOs.

That's why the media treats the outsourcing of hundreds of thousands of white-collar jobs to English-speaking, high-IQ Indians as a respectable cause for alarm, but not the insourcing of tens of millions of immigrants to perform blue-collar and servile jobs.

Immigration policy, by its very nature, is about discriminating, about selecting whom we should admit and whom we should keep out. It is one of the fundamental responsibilities of our elected representatives because if they don't decide, inevitably some private interest is going to decide who gets in.

Of the five billion foreigners who live in countries with average per capita GDPs lower than Mexico's, how many would like to move to a First World coun-

try? The Mexican government recently estimated that one-sixth of all Mexicans now live in the United States, and a poll by the Pew Hispanic Center found that over 40 percent of the 106 million Mexicans left in Mexico wish to follow them here. Without government limits on immigration, the population of America would balloon by hundreds of millions, plateauing only when life here became as miserable as in the Third World.

With countless millions hoping to immigrate to America, our policy could be to choose those applicants whose arrival would most benefit existing citizens. One imperfect but obvious way would be to estimate how much more immigrants are likely to pay in taxes than they cost in government spending. A 1997 National Academy of Sciences study found that immigrants with less than a high-school education each cost the taxpayers \$90,000 net over their lifetimes and high-school graduates cost \$30,000. But immigrants with a college degree or more brought a net benefit to the Treasury of \$100,000.

Yet for a couple of decades, the government has been handing out 50,000 green cards annually via its Diversity Visa Lottery, for which it receives up to 10 million applications, and those are just from countries not represented among the top 15 sources of immigrants. You might think this would be a great opportunity to skim the cream off the top. Yet the federal government simply accepts applicants at random, because choosing would be discriminatory.

Of course, our elites aren't against being personally selected themselves for higher-status positions. Indeed, they compete fiercely to have their children admitted to the most exclusive schools. In the bestselling novel *The Nanny Diaries*, the wealthy Manhattan mother hires a developmental consultant to evaluate nanny's prepping of four-year-old Grayer for the grueling pre-school application process.

The expert grills the servant with questions such as, "How many bilingual meals are you serving him a week? ... And you are attending the Guggenheim on what basis?" Shocked to learn that nanny is letting little Grayer do the kinds of things four-year-olds like to do, the consultant concludes, "I have to question whether you're leveraging your assets to escalate Grayer's performance."

What is left out of the novel might be even funnier: all toddlers aiming for prestigious private nursery schools in New York City must take the 60-75 minute Wechsler IQ test administered by the Educational Records Bureau for \$375. Yet their private obsession with their children's IQ hasn't stopped the Manhattan media mafia, ever since the *Bell Curve* brouhaha, from publicly denouncing IQ testing as a racist and discredited concept.

The typical white intellectual considers himself superior to ordinary white folks for two contradictory reasons. First, he constantly proclaims his belief

selves to sneak into America. The outcome is an extreme degree of discrimination in favor of vested interests.

Neoconservatives have long claimed to dissent from this reigning multiculturalist orthodoxy by advocating a philosophy of immigration that observers have dubbed propositionism. The neocons argue that immigrants should be admitted based on their current—or eventual—assent to the propositions underlying the United States government, such as "All men are created equal." But the neocons have failed to answer numerous questions about how their philosophy would work.

If American values are rare, do we really want to deplete the rest of the world of the few people who agree with us? In many Third World countries, a "brain drain" saps medical care and economic progress. Do we want to be also responsible for "proposition attrition?"

On the other hand, what if agreement with American propositions is as common as the neoconservatives have

ONE-SIXTH OF ALL MEXICANS NOW LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES.

in human equality, but they don't. Second, he has a high IQ, but they don't.

This anti-discrimination ideology does not mean liberals refrain from discriminating among people in private, which would be impossible. Instead, it simply implies that to discuss in public how the choices among individuals should be made and what their consequences might be would be in the worst possible taste.

Decisions over what Lenin aptly described as the key questions of "Who? Whom?" continue to be made, of course, but by special interests in private. Owners of large farms and slaughterhouses, for instance, continue to recruit illegal aliens, recent immigrants bring over in-laws under "family reunification" rules, and foreigners decide for them-

claimed in trying to justify our Mesopotamian misadventure? President Bush has asserted that most Iraqis share our fundamental political values. If that's true of the furious Iraqis, who are notorious even among other Arabs for self-destructive lunacy, then how many billions of other foreigners qualify to move to America? How then does propositionism help us choose among the hundreds of millions who want to immigrate?

And exactly whom would the propositionists keep out, other than the most fanatical Muslim fundamentalists? With the exception of a handful of refugee dissidents, the vast majority of immigrants to America are in it for the money and are willing to mouth whatever platitudes would be required to get in.

Finally, there's an insidiously Jacobin implication to propositionism. If believing in neoconservative theories should make anyone in the world eligible for immigration, what should disbelieving in them make thought criminals like you and me? Candidates for deportation? For the guillotine?

Ultimately, propositionism seems less like a well thought-through philosophy and more like ethnocentric nostalgia, an intellectualized exercise in ancestor-worship. Emotionally, the neocons abhor asking tough questions about today's immigrants because they see that as the equivalent of asking tough questions about their own Ellis Island immigrant forebears and, thus, about themselves.

Fortunately, in America, citizenship is not an ideological category but a legal one. And emphasizing citizenship offers us a functional, yet idealistic, alternative to the special-interest abuses of multiculturalism and the incoherence of propositionism. Citizenism calls upon Americans to favor the welfare, even at some cost to ourselves, of our current fellow citizens over that of foreigners and internal factions.

Nor does citizenism suffer the fatal paradox dooming the white nationalism advocated by Jared Taylor and others who encourage whites to get down and mud-wrestle with the Al Sharptons of the world for control of the racial spoils system. Unfortunately for Taylor's movement, white Americans don't want, as he recommends, to act like the rest of the world; they want to act like white Americans. They believe on the whole in individualism rather than tribalism, national patriotism rather than ethnic loyalty, meritocracy rather than nepotism, nuclear families rather than extended clans, law and fair play rather than privilege, corporations of strangers rather than mafias of relatives, and true love rather than the arranged marriages necessary to keep ethnic categories clear-cut.

Citizenism is patriotism understood not as shouting that America is the best but as wanting the best for Americans.

The pride of Americans in their country is being exploited by those promoting mass immigration, who tell us that having our country fill up with foreigners proves we're the most desirable place to live. In daily life, though, we recognize that the most prestigious places, such as Harvard, are not the most crowded but the ones with the longest lines trying to get in. For instance, the Augusta National Golf Club reaffirmed its status as the top country club by forcing Bill Gates, the nation's richest man, to cool his heels on its waiting list for quite a few years before finally admitting him.

It's important to note that citizenism applies to present citizens, "to ourselves and our Posterity" as the Preamble to the Constitution says. In this, the demands of citizenism are analogous to the fiduciary duty of corporate managers.

When I was getting an MBA many years ago, I was the favorite of an acerbic old finance professor because he could count on me to blurt out all the stupid misconceptions to which overconfident students are prone. One day he asked the class: "If you were running a publicly traded company, would it be acceptable for you to create new stock and sell it for less than it was worth?"

"Sure," I smugly announced. "Our legal duty is to maximize our stockholders' wealth. While selling the stock for less than it's worth would harm our present shareholders, it would benefit our new shareholders who buy the underpriced stock, so it all comes out in the wash. Right?"

"Wrong!" He thundered. "Your obligation is to your current shareholders, not to somebody who might buy the stock in the future."

That same logic applies to the valuable right to live in America. Just as the managers of a public company have a

responsibility to the existing stockholders not to diminish the value of their shares by selling new ones too cheaply to outsiders, our politicians have a moral obligation to the current citizens and their descendants to preserve the scarcity value of their right to live in America.

The American people's traditional patrimony of relatively high wages and low land prices, the legacy of a lightly populated landscape, has made this a blessedly middle-class country. Uncontrolled immigration, however, by driving up the supply of labor and the demand for housing is importing Latin American levels of inequality into immigrant-inundated states such as California.

Unskilled illegal immigrants pound down the wages of those of our fellow American citizens least able to afford the competition. For example, the wages of slaughterhouse workers today are barely half what they were two decades ago, even without adjusting for inflation. By cutting pay for the worst jobs, illegal immigrants have made honest work less appealing to many citizens, especially young African-American males, too many of whom have dropped out of the workforce and into the lumpenproletariat world of crime. That's bad for both black Americans and for our country as a whole.

One subtle advantage of citizenism is there would be less need for the politically correct censorship to "celebrate diversity," which has become such a blight on free speech in America. We would no longer feel so obliged to browbeat each other into claiming that other citizens are exactly the same in their behavior as we are. That constant lying becomes morally irrelevant because under citizenism, the duty toward solidarity means that the old saying "he's a son of a bitch but he's our son of a bitch" turns into a moral precept. ■

Steve Sailer is TAC's film critic and a VDARE.com columnist.

Eat, Drink, and Buy Merrily

The nonstop party of the Greenspan era was sustained by debt and currency debasement. Bernanke promises more of the same.

By Bill Bonner

ALAN GREENSPAN, the most famous public servant since Pontius Pilate, leaves his post on Jan. 31. We stand back in awe and wonder. Is it not to him that we owe this long stretch of calm and prosperity, known to economists as the Great Moderation? Has he not ably served six administrations, tending the empire's money? Did he not win a host of awards, including the prestigious Enron Prize for Distinguished Public Service?

If nothing else, the American empire has been a more entertaining place since Greenspan took over at the Federal Reserve 18 years ago. Without sinking into the *esoterica economica* of it, the Fed's role is to maintain financial discipline, to "take away the punchbowl" before things get out of control. Greenspan's approach has been different. Like a naughty schoolboy, he adds more gin. As he leaves office, financiers are tap dancing on tables on Wall Street, after passing out \$21 billion in bonuses. In California, realtors slap each other on the back after another year of double-digit house price gains. And over on the other side of the world, Chinese manufacturers can't remember ever having it so good.

Americans gave him the Medal of Freedom. The British made him a knight. The French inducted him into the Legion of Honor. To his peers he is the "greatest central banker who ever lived." To the public, his powers are almost magical. So how did an appointed U.S. public

official achieve such popularity? The answer is simple. He threw the biggest party the world has ever seen.

Setting short-term lending rates first below market levels and then even below the rate of consumer price inflation, his easy-money policies stifled a much-needed recession in 2001, stirred a real-estate bubble on both coasts, coaxed a generation of Americans deeper into debt, juiced the price of oil up 500 percent, and helped re-elect two presidents and hundreds of members of Congress.

From the time he entered the Fed on Aug. 11, 1987, to the time he leaves it, the tap has never stopped running.

Since 1987, outstanding home-mortgage debt has jumped from \$1.8 trillion to \$8.2 trillion. Total consumer debt has gone from \$2.7 trillion to \$11 trillion. Household debt has quadrupled.

In 2005, the party got so hot that the neighbors threatened to call the police. Real wages (adjusted for inflation) went down for the second year in a row, leaving people with little choice. If they wanted to continue living in the style to which they had become accustomed, they had to borrow. Spiders who tried to weave their webs in the doorways of America's lending institutions got no rest in '05; the savings rate went negative—for the first time since the Great Depression.

And government debt exploded too. The feds owed less than \$2 trillion in the second Reagan administration, a figure

that had been almost constant for the previous 40 years. But since Greenspan has been at the Fed, the red ink has gushed—to over \$8 trillion.

Greenspan must have had a special place in his heart for politicians of both parties; he was always ready to back them with as much fresh credit as they required. During the two terms of George W. Bush, the federal government has borrowed more money from foreign governments and banks than all other American administrations put together, from 1776 to 2000. And more debt will be added in the eight Bush years than in the previous 200. If you distributed the cost of the government's programs, promises, and pledges to the voters, along with the nation's private debt, the typical household, and the nation itself, would be broke.

On Greenspan's watch, the homeland also lost ground to its rivals. The trade deficit more than quadrupled from \$150.7 billion to \$661.8 and will reach \$830 billion in 2006. When he came to power, the U.S. was still a creditor. Now it is a debtor, with more than \$11 trillion worth of American assets in foreign hands, a more than 500 percent increase since 1987.

Yet the maestro's financial reign has entered the history books as the Great Moderation, though there is nothing in the slightest bit moderate about America's binge borrowing. And still, it is widely believed that the drunken revelry, the *sturm und drang*, the boom

and bust of the markets have all magically vanished. It is as though a marching band had switched to elevator music, with the parade that normally follows replacing its clowns and freaks in gaudy get-ups with accountants, economists, and investment quants with laptop computers. The thrill has gone out of the whole thing. But so, supposedly, has the risk. Now the only risk is making a bad calculation.

That is said to be Greenspan's real legacy; he has finally made central banking work. And his successor, Ben Bernanke, pledges not to mess it up. By targeting inflation, he says, he will be able to make the financial world even more stable and predictable. And if the party ever starts to wind down, he has told fellow economists that he will drop money out of helicopters, if necessary, to keep it going.

Here is where the gods must start holding their sides and rolling on the ground. This is not the first time they have seen this movie, but they laugh

forced tribute. As the empire matured, force gave way to fraud. A kind of habitual cheating that the Romans called *consuetudo fraudium* crept into every transaction. First, the imperial money lost its value. Then, eventually, the empire itself was lost. Nero had no helicopters, but he knew Bernanke's trick. In AD 64, he decreed that the number of *aureus* coins minted from a pound of gold would increase from 41 to 45, making each coin about 10 percent less valuable. The silver *denarius*, meanwhile, lost 99.98 percent of its value in the five centuries before the sacking of Rome.

Paper money makes it easier to cheat. Without dumping it from the sky, the dollar has lost 95 percent of its purchasing power since the Fed was set up to protect it in 1913. The Roman Empire managed to stand for a while before it went down. The American empire, on the other hand, barely stands at all. It is already a rickety slum of debt, delusion, and swindle—built on a mountain of Mr. Greenspan's easy money.

In California, house prices have raced so far ahead of incomes that barely one in 10 buyers can afford the median house. Yet thanks to "creative financing," more houses are sold than ever before. In New York, lenders do not stick around to see how the loans work out. Instead, they pretend the credits are good and package the debt into handy units for "investors" to buy. The financiers know that many home buyers can't afford their houses and that the U.S. government can pay back its debts in dollars of almost any value it chooses to make—or not pay them back at all. But no one mentions it.

Further up the hillside are whole legions of strategists, kibitzers, economists, and full-time obfuscators whose role is to make us all believe six impossible things before breakfast and a dozen more before dinner. Economists at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, do to numbers what guards at Abu Ghraib did to prisoners. They rough them up so badly that they are ready to say anything. In mid-2005, for example, it was reported that productivity was increasing at a 2.9 percent rate—the fastest pace in 9 months. Productivity is supposed to measure output per unit of time. But the yardstick was bent. If a computer this year can process information 10 times as fast as one last year, the worker who assembled it has multiplied his output 1000 percent, they said.

But of all the twisted concepts that came out in 2005, the explanation of the world's international financial system offered by Alan Greenspan's replacement, Ben Bernanke, is perhaps the most elegantly preposterous. Americans are not spending too much, said Bernanke. The problem is that Asians are spending too little. As a result, they have a "savings glut" that Americans helpfully recycle into granite countertops and home entertainment systems.

AMERICANS ARE NOT SPENDING TOO MUCH, SAID BERNANKE. ASIANS ARE SPENDING TOO LITTLE. THEY HAVE A "SAVINGS GLUT" THAT AMERICANS HELPFULLY RECYCLE INTO GRANITE COUNTERTOPS AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS.

hard every time. Since 1971, the world has had an "experimental" financial system, with currencies backed by nothing more than the full faith and credit of government. Too bad, but history shows that government faith and credit always runs out, usually sooner than you expect. There are no counterexamples. Even the most successful empires in history have not been able to make full faith and credit stick.

The Roman Empire followed a, shall we say, classical model of imperial finance: it was built on a foundation of

Down at the bottom are petty agents spreading deceit and misinformation. Financial planners, tax advisors, stockbrokers, and real estate agents tell the public what it wants to hear. A stock? A house? Just buy and hold for the long run. You can't lose. Appraisers and analysts stretch valuations in order to help close a deal. Mortgage lenders know perfectly well that the appraisals are lies, but they wink at them with one eye and wink at the borrower's phony income declaration with the other. Lenders no longer verify income claims.

Bernanke managed to condense a whole universe of lies, misapprehensions, and conceits into two short words. Yet as compact as they were, they covered up a grotesque system of global finance so out of whack that even congressmen are appalled: One nation buys things it doesn't need with money it doesn't have. Another sells on credit to people who already cannot pay—and builds more factories to increase output.

And the party goes on! Every level colludes with every other level to keep each from noticing that anything is wrong. On the banks of the Potomac, people of every class, rank, and station are pleased to believe that all is well. And there, at the Federal Reserve headquarters, is our caste of economic holy men. Fed economists and Fed governors themselves not only urge citizens to mortgage their houses, buy SUVs, and commit other acts of recklessness, they also make sure the nation's money plays its role in the fraud. They do not even have to clip the precious metal out of the imperial coins as their Roman predecessors used to do; there is no precious metal to take out.

From the center to the furthest garisons on the periphery, from the lowest rank to the highest, everyone willingly, happily, and proudly participates in one of the greatest deceptions of all time. The wage slaves squander borrowed money on imported doodads and gamble their homes on adjustable-rate mortgages. The patricians gamble on hedge funds that speculate on treasury debt and Miami condos.

And right at the top is Alan Greenspan himself, with a smile on his face, passing the bottle to Ben Bernanke. ■

Bill Bonner is the founder and editor of The Daily Reckoning and co-author, with Addison Wiggin, of the New York Times business best seller Empire of Debt (Wiley 2005).

Land With No Plants

As manufacturing disappears, towns and lives do too.

By Arthur Versluis

LAST WEEK, I encountered a friend from high-school days. His name is Bill, and trailing behind him was his young son, who stood by patiently while we spoke. Unlike many of our mutual acquaintances from those days, Bill still has a job in a factory, making heating ducts for residential housing. I guess it's tedious work, but it pays well enough. He hadn't aged much, and he still had the same quick smile and thatch of dark hair.

But he represents an anachronism in today's America. After high school, like a number of our acquaintances, he got a job in a local factory that manufactured sports clothing, and when the corporation moved the workers' jobs off to Puerto Rico and then to China, he was lucky enough to find a well-paying position in the factory where he now works—as long as the housing bubble continues, that is. He's the last of our high-school friends still holding a factory job, the kind of job that once brought millions of Americans into what used to be the middle class. The others are scraping by in the new service economy.

During the tenure of the Bush administration so far, Michigan has lost more than 111,900 jobs in the automotive industry and according to analyst Sean McAlinden will likely lose more than 46,000 over the next three years. GM alone recently announced that it would shed 30,000 more jobs over the next few years. The losses aren't only in the automotive industry, either.

I live 20 minutes from Greenville, Michigan. For more than 60 years, Greenville was home to a variety of

factories, some making parts for the automotive industry, but the largest, now owned by the Swedish firm Electrolux, makes refrigerators. A couple of years ago, Electrolux announced that the plant would be entirely closed by March 2006, and they are on schedule. Nearly 3,000 Greenville factory workers will have lost their jobs because the corporation replaced the American plant with a similar one in Juarez, Mexico.

Juarez is a hotbed for *maquiladora* operations, and Electrolux's new 500-acre site is one of more than 300 such factories in this region. The Electrolux site in Mexico will allow them to take advantage of the El Paso, Texas, 2,500-acre Foreign Trade Zone, which allows the company to export goods into the United States without import duties or usual Customs procedures. The hulking yellow Greenville plant is almost a quarter-mile square, but it would fit into a small corner of the massive Juarez site.

Small suppliers also suffer: Quincy Products, of Quincy, Michigan, whose 49 employees made shelves for Electrolux refrigerators, abruptly shut down on the announcement of the Electrolux decision to move the plant to Mexico. Quincy didn't make the news, but the loss of jobs is not inconsequential for a small town.

At almost the same time that Electrolux announced it was moving to Mexico—despite massive and desperate tax concessions and other incentives from the state—Hitachi announced that it was closing its magnet factory in nearby Edmore, Michigan, only a short

drive from Russell Kirk's home in Mecosta. General Electric built the Edmore plant in 1952 at the urging of a GE employee who had grown up in that small town. At its peak, the plant offered more than 500 jobs, and still half a century later provided hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to the local township's tax base. The plant also helped pay for local projects like the high-school yearbook and was so woven into Edmore's fabric that the sign upon entering town used to read: "Magnetic Edmore: The Town that Attracts."

and various other destructive treaties, secret WTO conclaves, and tax arrangements encourage manufacturers to abandon the United States?

Thomas Jefferson argued that we should keep our factories safely overseas, since, he observed, factories require a surplus population, and he concluded in an especially striking image, "The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body." But we already have the surplus population for an industrial

ing interest in the lives of working Americans, but now, it seems, the Left has gone cold and still. And almost no one—conservative, progressive, or leftist—seems willing to acknowledge the inevitable consequences of the most far-reaching social shift in the United States since the depopulation of American farmland in the 20th century: the deliberate de-industrialization of America.

The congressman for the Greenville region is 8-term Republican Dave Camp, who has never seen a globalist trade bill he didn't love. He voted for the NAFTA legislation that is now devastating manufacturing base in his own district; recently, he voted enthusiastically for CAFTA; and if he had the chance, no doubt he'd vote for the FTAA, too. If he has a perfect record against American manufacturing in his own region, well, according to VoteSmart, he has a 100 percent positive rating from Financial Executives International. He was implicated in the Abramoff scandal, apparently has gone on luxurious junkets, and so on. Still he looks to be a shoo-in for re-election next year, even as the region he represents continues to decline.

Free trade remains Republican orthodoxy, though there's nothing conservative about blind allegiance to globalism and unrooted corporations. What does transnationalism conserve? The historian John Lukacs is quite right to distinguish between contemporary conservatism and traditional conservatism: the former is actually a species of radicalism that is far closer to the former Soviet Union's centralism than to the original American Republic. Much of "conservatism" is in fact a spectacular failure, which we see by its consequences.

Can the United States sustain military bases all over the world on the basis of almost incalculably large trade and national deficits? Is it really wise to import more and more of our food? In the meantime, our politicians are busily

THERE'S NOTHING CONSERVATIVE ABOUT BLIND ALLEGIANCE TO GLOBALISM.

Michigan seems much better suited for industry than Northern Mexico. The Greenville plant is just across the river from Main Street, on a knoll near a residential neighborhood near a rail line. Folks can live, work, and shop right in the same area, without even driving a car. There's a long tradition of hard-working families here—in fact, there's everything a company would want. Still, Electrolux shipped out.

Every city and town around here has been bleeding manufacturing jobs. Factories are shuttered, torn down, standing empty. Every week brings more announcements of closure. This week a paper mill and a Ford supplier, next week, who knows? Delphi declares bankruptcy and proposes slashing wages by two-thirds; Johnson Controls moves a factory to Mexico. And no, the new Wal-Mart on the outskirts of Greenville isn't going to replace those jobs—it's part of the problem, not only because it depends on cheap imports from Chinese factories, but also because it will further decimate family-owned Main Street businesses. Greenville is optimistically constructing a new industrial park, but what good will that do as long as NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA,

base, and under such circumstances, Jefferson would almost certainly argue differently, as indeed he did later in life.

What are all the millions of Bills supposed to do? Is everyone supposed to go to college? Then what? Greenville, Edmore, and other small towns out in rural Michigan have no nearby or even regional centers of higher education, only a single small community college a half hour or more away. The Electrolux plant offered 2,700 jobs to the community, and the local suppliers and other factories offered hundreds more. These jobs represent the foundational wealth basis for the regional economy, and already, before Electrolux even closed, Greenville's previously vigorous Main Street featured empty store windows and "for sale" and "for rent" signs. Its Danish Festival may be glum this year, and for good reason. No amount of community-college training will replace the foundational community wealth or the broad employment that the American industrial base provided.

The United States is systematically dismantling its foundational industries, and one has to ask: where are the opposing voices on the Left or the Right? At one time, the American Left had a pass-

outfitting China and other nations with the best in American agricultural, industrial, and technological capacity. If in a decade, God forbid, it came to war, who would be in a better position? China with countless state-of-the-art factories or America with its Empty Building Belt?

Over the past six years, the United States has lost over three million manufacturing jobs. 2006 will be the sixth straight year of consecutive job losses for Michigan, where we have lost 308,900 jobs since Bush took office and are projected to lose another 10,000 this year. The area around the city of Juarez, Mexico, on the other hand, boasts over 220,000 jobs, and the number grows.

What are people to do in the Empty Building Belt of the upper Midwest? Many will turn to lower incomes at small businesses in or near their homes. Already you see more signs sprouting: Pee-wee's Radiators, Joe's Fences, Pam's Pets, Pedlar's Indoor Flea Market, Kim's Flowers, Joe's Small Engine Repair. Over the long run, I expect that we will see a revival of small businesses and family farms and of old-fashioned Yankee entrepreneurship—the return of the kind of prudent, debt-free livelihood extolled by Thomas Jefferson, who wrote of the American Revolution:

How happy we were during the war, from the single circumstance that we could not run in debt! This counteracted all the inconveniences we felt, as the present facility of ruining ourselves overweighs all the blessings of peace. I know no condition happier than that of a Virginia farmer ... conducting himself as he did during the war. His estate supplies a good table, clothes himself and his family with their ordinary apparel, furnishes a small surplus to buy salt, sugar, coffee, and a little finery for his wife and daughters, enables him to

receive and to visit his friends, and furnishes him pleasing and healthy occupation. To secure all this, he needs but one act of self-denial, to put off buying anything till he has the money to pay for it.

Rural and small-town America may look forward to a more decentralized economic life, and this could have some beneficial consequences—more self-reliance, more sense of local community. Folk in places like Edmore or Greenville will probably adapt. Truly lost urban areas like Flint or Detroit, less easily.

It wasn't so long ago that Flint supposedly had the highest per capita income in the United States. In the early 1980s, GM employed almost 80,000 workers there, 52,000 by 1990, and 22,000 in 2005. The number of industrial workers keeps dropping; the number of huge abandoned buildings and cracked, empty lots keeps growing. In Detroit, remaining young folk have taken to arranging techno-music parties and festivals in abandoned factories or warehouses, and reportedly it's a Canadian tourist fashion to come across the river and explore the "fabulous ruins of Detroit."

But what are the long-term implications for these tears in the social and economic fabric? What will happen to American middle-class life if the only two engines of real wealth—the remaining family farms and surviving industry—are thoroughly wiped out by radical globalism? Currently, the great divide in American society is said to be cultural, but increasingly I think it will become clear that the real divide is economic. And as the consequences of globalist policies become more widespread and visible, we will see a sea change in American political life. When the multi-trillion dollar house of financial cards—hedge funds, credit derivatives, and the like—teeters and falls, Americans will

come back to reality. We don't eat arcane financial instruments, and we don't wear or live in information.

I have suggested that America may move toward a decentralized economy, and that there might be a renaissance based on local and regional authority instead of on federal coercion. But there's also the possibility that Americans will eschew the difficult road of prudence and hard work and savings and look instead for a quick fix. They may turn to demagogues who promise anything then artificially pump up the economy through more reckless federal spending and military adventurism. One has at least to wonder whether—as Sinclair Lewis wondered in the 1930s in his novel *It Can't Happen Here*—an American fascism is out of the question or already partly visible.

Over the short term, things will go on much as they have, with politicians and talking heads sweeping these issues under the carpet, however large the ensuing lump may become. But over the longer term, the consequences will become too visible to ignore and will not be rectified by Washington officials whose routine solution is to jigger statistics or rhetoric to fit the reigning political paradigm—that is, to throw another carpet on the lump. Eventually, there will come a political reckoning. The day may even come when the United States heeds the advice of Washington in his Farewell Address—advice characterized by economic, military, and political prudence. The question is what happens in the meantime.

Bill is doing all right—for now. There have been layoffs, but, he says, they'd have to close the plant before they reach his level of seniority. If they did that, he tells me, "I don't know what we'd do." ■

Arthur Versluis is professor of American Studies at Michigan State University and author of numerous books.

Lumpen Leisure

Bread and circuses ... and jet-skis.

By James Howard Kunstler

AMONG THE MANY wonders and marvels of American life in the 20th century, especially after World War II, when our country ruled much of the world economically, was the astounding rise in standards of living among social classes that had hardly known leisure or had a dollar to spare on its accoutrements from time immemorial. The subject of class in America has been so sore that we can barely acknowledge its existence, despite the workings of whole industries devoted to exploiting the envy of the lower orders. The very term—lower orders—would be considered grounds for sacking if I had the misfortune of teaching at a college and will certainly be seized on by critics as evidence of my intellectual unfittedness. In short, any discourse on class consciousness is regarded in America these days as an obscenity far worse than stealing \$100 million from the shareholders of a telecom corporation.

I write this as someone who does not have a Marxist bone in his body—I am devoid of the impulse to reform the social class system *per se* precisely because I regard it as an implacable fact of life. The universe is organized hierarchically, and that's all there is to it. All of the subcategories of things in it tend to be organized hierarchically, too, especially the social life of animals, including human beings. It might be argued that the hunter-gatherers of prehistory enjoyed more pure equality in their little bands and tribes, but that was only because they possessed next to nothing in material wealth. The rest, literally, is

history. Once civilization got up and running, the story was nothing but class, since our complex societies required many layers of organization in the making, moving, and caretaking of things, and some persons enjoyed more favorable roles than others.

Industrial civilization enlarged the middle class without necessarily relieving the misery of the lower classes, which also grew, shifting their labors from the farm to the factory. Marxism was, of course, an effort to reform industrial society by inciting the lower orders to make war on all the orders above them. It failed because it eliminated the necessary incentives for producing industrial wealth—namely, the legal right of persons to accumulate it—while it additionally failed to abolish privilege among the politically connected. So privileged persons in places like the Soviet Union simply worked around the artificial impediments to a superior lifestyle, while the masses toiled in squalid and resigned futility.

Now, the high tide of industrial society, the 20th century, also happened to be an era of tremendously destructive industrial warfare. By mid-century, after two World Wars, the industrial nations of Europe had exhausted and bankrupted themselves and lay physically shattered. The same was true of Asia's only industrial power, Japan. The situation in the United States, on the other hand, was favorable to the extreme. The U.S. continental homeland went unscathed in both World Wars, and at the end of the second, our factories,

mines, oil fields, harbors, and railroads stood completely intact while everyone else's were devastated. We set out immediately to supply the rest of the shattered world with the necessary manufactured goods to resume civilized life and lent them money to buy our stuff. Once this program got underway in earnest, one of the side effects was a fabulous enrichment of America's laboring classes.

These classes—the assembly-line workers, the road-builders, the houseframers, masons, auto mechanics, truck drivers, et cetera—entered this miraculous new age straight from the lengthy sequential traumas of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Their expectations following the war were modest. Many were glad to have simply made it home alive from the canebrakes of the Solomon Islands and the beaches of Normandy. There was widespread anxiety that without the artificial stimulus of war production, America would sink into economic depression again. This worked out otherwise. The factories easily converted back to car-making from tank-building; William Levitt figured out how to mass produce the suburban house, starting a boom; and the American oil industry got the world's motors up and running again to get the big cleanup of Europe and Asia underway. As an added benefit, the American managing classes had returned from their stints as officers in the armed forces with equally modest expectations for the rewards of being in charge of things in civilian life. The Army had conditioned them into a subculture assembled

by rank but careful in the allocation of privilege, so as to keep up morale through the ranks for the greater good of winning the war. The officers-turned-executives brought these values into postwar corporate life for the greater good of winning a durable prosperity. By the same token, the lower ranks came out of the war with a fund of respect for the authority that had engineered their victory.

And so, by 1956, say, the president of a toaster company might be paid several multiples more than the guy on the assembly line but not obscenely more. In 1956, both would certainly be owners of American cars—a Cadillac versus a Ford Fairlane—and might well have owned their own homes in greater or lesser suburbs. But their standards of living would seem, from today's standpoint, startlingly similar. Both families would have had TV, perhaps one versus several, but both families also went to the movies at the Loews Theater and democratically took their seats first-come-first-served. Ditto the ballparks and football stadiums in the days before luxury boxes. Both upper and working class families ate the standard supermarket victuals of the day because the gourmet stratification of America had not yet happened. Both families might well have sent their children to public schools. Both fathers may have been Sunday golfers, though on different public and private courses. By the early 1960s, with America at the height of its manufacturing dominance, General Motors assembly-line workers made as much money as tenured college professors.

Now, politically, the situation I describe would seem to be very desirable, perhaps ideal, considering all the unjust systems that had existed before and elsewhere. The American system in those years was fairly equitable and appeared to be stable. But like all good things deriving from industrial civilization, this social-leveling process had

some strange diminishing returns. One was that the lower ranks of American society became so affluent by historical terms that they were able to impose their tastes on everybody else, if only because there were so many of them, with so much money to spend. They began to occupy and modify the terrain of America in a way that lower classes never had been able to before—using the prime artifact of industrial civilization to accomplish that takeover, the car. They bought homes in the new subdivisions that were obliterating the rural hinterlands of the cities, and before long all the commercial accessories followed: the strip malls, the department stores, the fried-food huts, the cinemaplexes, the office parks, the Big Box store—an entire alternate infrastructure to the tired, bleak downtowns of the industrial cities, which had begun to sicken in the Great Depression and with a very few special exceptions would never return to health again. The new stuff built all over America in the late 20th century was analogous to the content of the television programming to which the lower classes insidiously became addicted—a cartoon simulacrum of a real world that was systematically being obliterated. Instead of a real countryside outside the hated cities, we now had suburbia, a cartoon of country living. Instead of towns, shopping malls. Eventually the theme park became both the embodiment of the destruction wreaked across the land and paradoxically the last refuge from it. Americans would flock to Walt Disney World in Orlando to put themselves in a saccharine replica of the authentic Main Street environments that they had thoroughly trashed in their own home places.

Another diminishing return of the American postwar industrial fiesta was that thanks to our exertions, our salesmanship, and our generosity, the other industrial nations were back on their feet

making things again, and before too long they were making things better than we were and less expensively, too. Thus, beginning in the 1970s and coincident with our all-time peak in oil production, America began to hemorrhage blue-collar factory jobs. Families that had grown comfortable in high-paying assembly-line jobs, who had motor boats and second homes on little lakes and took vacations at the Disneyplexes and expected life to get ever better, were clobbered by the stagflation and other economic disorders of the day. Meanwhile, the labor unions that had guarded their interests for decades rapidly lost their power to negotiate for workers whose jobs increasingly no longer even existed.

At this point, a new economy began to replace the old smokestack economy. But the new one was not the one that was advertised in politics or the news media. It was not the information economy based on the spread of computers. Neither information nor computer-aided efficiency had net social value when jobs and standards of living were being destroyed. Nor was this new economy the vaunted service economy, a perpetual-motion fantasy akin to the proverbial village whose denizens supported themselves by taking in each other's laundry. No, all that was mendacious balderdash. The real new economy was the final blowout of the cheap-oil era: the hypertrophic build-out of suburban sprawl and the furnishing and final accessorizing of it. In other words, our living arrangement essentially became the remaining basis of our economy, in the absence of any other purposeful creation of value or wealth, such as manufacturing things. And because it was a racket devoted to a way of life with no future, it spawned enormous cynicism. Just as the immersive ugliness of the suburban highway strip was economic entropy made visible, so the cynicism of the public was entropy applied to

human values, a force propelling things into disorder. When nothing was sacred, everything became profane.

The demoralization of the American public, and especially of the economic lower orders, proceeded remorselessly from the 1980s on and became focused on two very pernicious ideas: first, the belief that it was possible to get something for nothing, and second, the belief that when you wish upon a star, your dreams come true.

The first derived from the fact that Americans still appeared to generate wealth without really producing anything of value. This was achieved through the accumulation of debt represented by the false collateral of suburban real estate—the infrastructure of a living arrangement with no future. Meanwhile, this debt, or credit—hallucinated surplus wealth—was cleverly converted into huge batches of tradable financial instruments and used to drive both bond and derivatives markets. Since finance is ultimately predicated on the expectation that the wealth of societies will ever increase, this economy was the greatest shuck and jive the world had ever seen.

The second idea, that when you wish upon a star your dreams come true, was its perfect accompaniment. It derived from the mental bombardments of advertising and Hollywood movies, and it provoked the American masses to believe that sooner or later the time would come when their individual big payoff would arrive, their ship would come in, their lottery number would hit the jackpot, they would break the house at the blackjack table of the Mirage Hotel.

Now, the trouble with this kind of demoralizing belief system is that most adult human beings realize at some level that it is at odds with the way the universe works, that it is an edifice of lies—just as a maxed-out collection of credit cards

was a lie about one's personal finances. Their sensed moral failures aroused in Americans a welter of negative emotion including guilt, shame, unworthiness, powerlessness, terror, and ultimately anger over having to feel these unpleasant emotions, and they expressed their anger by striking out against nature, employing the very machines that defined the terms of their existence, the automobile and its spawn: monster trucks, motorcycles, dune buggies, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and gigantic motorboats whose chief attractions were their power to negate the scale of the average freshwater lake while making enormous amounts of noise. These were people who no longer felt comfortable or even ontologically present in the world unless engines of some kind were ringing in their ears. Their assault on the landscape of America completed the destruction that suburbia

classroom. You could smoke in the doctor's waiting room. You could smoke in your seat on an airplane—a little ash-tray was provided right there in the arm-rest—and nobody was allowed to complain. In those days, smoking was more central to socializing than sharing food. TV broadcasting was largely supported by tobacco advertising. Smoking defined the character of movie stars: Humphrey Bogart expressed the entire range of human emotion in the way he handled his beloved Chesterfields, and eventually it killed him. In the middle of Times Square, a mechanized billboard with a hole in it blew "smoke rings" of steam out over the masses on the sidewalk. The adult population had plumes of smoke coming out of its collective mouths and nostrils the way that our society had smoke coming out of its cities and mill valleys. Notice how cigarette smoking

THESE WERE PEOPLE WHO **NO LONGER FELT COMFORTABLE** UNLESS ENGINES OF SOME KIND WERE **RINGING IN THEIR EARS**.

had left unfinished. And as the cheap oil, which made the whole exercise possible, fades into history with the global oil-production peak upon us, America was reduced to a nation of tattooed, overfed clowns in paramilitary drag, pretending to be powerful.

The tendency for symbolic behavior in human beings is impressive. We are naturally and unselfconsciously metaphorical beings. By the 1960s, when America's industrial smokestack economy was at its zenith, cigarette smoking was at its peak, too. Forty percent of the adult population smoked, each smoker behaving like a little factory, expelling the by-products of combustion at all hours of the day and night. It was practically required as a mark of adulthood. It was at least an entitlement. You could smoke on the job and in the college

has waned in lockstep with the decline of American smokestack industry.

Along similar lines today, it's compelling to see how NASCAR auto racing has risen to the level of a mania in early 21st-century America as the nation has reached its absolute zenith of automobile use. Even as the world approached the all-time global oil-production peak, Americans rallied obliviously to the weekend proving grounds of the stock-car gods. NASCAR eclipsed baseball, football, and basketball in popularity among spectator sports. Of course, in real life, driving automobiles had come to occupy a huge amount of the public's time. Many adults were spending a good two hours a day commuting to work and back. They were spending more time alone in their cars than with their spouses and children. NASCAR was the

apotheosis of the same kind of cars that Americans drove to work. The competition vehicles were called stock cars, after all, because they were, theoretically, just souped-up versions of the same models that anyone could find in stock at an ordinary car dealership—unlike the Formula One racecars favored in Europe. What's more, the American economy was now mostly based on creating and maintaining the enormous infrastructures of motoring, i.e., suburbia, just as it had previously been centered on the infrastructures of industrial production. So the masses had merely shifted their symbolic behavior focus from an emphasis on expelling smoke to an emphasis on watching souped-up ordinary cars move symbolically around in circles.

Or more precisely, ovals, which, from the grandstand, was sort of like sitting on a freeway overpass for five hours watching traffic. The NASCAR race-tracks had evolved from county-fair dirt tracks with a few rickety bleachers to gargantuan stadiums accommodating more than 100,000 spectators. It was significant, too, that the NASCAR subculture arose in the South, the old Dixie states, where the automobile had tremendous social transformative power in the previous half century. Prior to the Second World War, Dixie had been an agricultural backwater with few cities of consequence, peopled by, among other groups, a dominant Caucasian peasantry, called "rednecks" because of the effects of the sun on exposed pale skin in the dusty crop rows.

States like Georgia, North Carolina, and Alabama were huge. You could fit 11 Connecticut in Alabama and have room for Rhode Island and Delaware. Unless they lived right along the railroad line, the folks down on the farm were pretty much stuck in place. The automobile liberated the rednecks from the oppression of geography as emancipation had liberated

blacks from the legalities of chattel ownership. In fact, the effect of the car was arguably much greater, since blacks continued to exist in economic quasi-serfdom despite the putative change in their legal status. The car and all its manifold benefits hoisted poor rednecks into a middle-class existence that had seemed like a distant fairy tale previously, something only seen in the magazine pages they had used to wallpaper the rooms of their cracker cottages—their own typological term for such a dwelling. They became truckers and car dealers and car repairmen and the owners of fried-food franchises out on the highway. They made good wages, and some became rich. Once a broad money base was established, they excelled at suburban development because rural land was so cheap and there was so much of it. They worshipped the car more than they worshipped Jesus.

The economy of the South was utterly transformed after the Second World War and the new economy was mostly about the car. Cheap gasoline along with cheap air-conditioning made the South livable for people who had a choice about where to make their homes. Cheap air-conditioning in particular made city life possible in a region that had lagged hopelessly behind the states of the Old Union—to the degree that Dixie had not a single city substantial enough for a major league baseball team prior to the 1960s. But the cities that arose in Dixie after the war were not like cities elsewhere in physical form. Orlando, Houston, Charlotte, and places like them had gone from being smaller than Buffalo to becoming immense crypto-urbations of ring freeways, radial commercial highway strips, and far-flung housing subdivisions around tiny withered peanuts of pre-war traditional downtown cores. Houston by the year 2000 was not a city in the traditional sense of being composed of neighborhoods and districts; rather it was an assemblage of

single-use-zoning wastelands: the shopping wasteland, the medical-services wasteland, the university wasteland, the cul-de-sac house wasteland, and so on, dominated by massive overlays of automobile infrastructure.

The economy of the New South, as it liked to call itself in the late 20th century, was more about the making of suburban sprawl than of the corporations that were lured down from the north to the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Georgia for their cheap labor. After all, the factories themselves eventually closed up shop as globalism made even cheaper labor in distant nations more attractive to corporate enterprise—but the sprawl remained, along with the office parks where obscenely paid top executives now ran things, while the once mighty working classes slid into a new kind of trailer-trash penury. And that is where things stand today, with the region, and the nation it is still attached to, sleepwalking into the early years of a permanent global fossil-fuel crises that will once again transform the nation in ways we can only sketchily imagine.

Into the first decade of the new century, the New South was viewed as being so successful compared to failing regions like the Midwest rust belt that the behavior emanating from Dixie became paradigmatic for the nation as a whole. It was infectious. These days, the working and sub-working classes from Maine to Minnesota follow country music as avidly as the homefolks down in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Some lumpen motoring activities obviously have regional characteristics that don't migrate well. Snowmobile culture arose in the northern states around 1970, when the take-home pay of people performing low-skill jobs reached its all-time high, and a machine formerly used as a rescue vehicle at ski areas and a maintenance tool on ranches was marketed as a winter toy for grown-ups. This was clearly

something that was not going to be as popular in Arkansas as in Minnesota. In fact, as this relatively new snowmobile subculture evolved, it became less about the machines themselves and more about drinking with friends in the outdoors—an unfortunate combination as anyone who reads the newspaper in what's left of small-town America can see in the Monday police blotters when snowmobilers with six Budweisers under their belts decapitate themselves running through fence lines at 50 miles an hour.

All-terrain vehicles, those clumsy three- and four-wheeled motorbikes, were most popular proportionately in the American West, where hunters were able to extend their range to the vast backcountry of federal lands and get their meat home with the assistance of a gasoline engine. Likewise, the dune-buggy originated in California for the simple reason that desert terrain was

in essence a boat with hardly any storage capacity on which one can do little else besides move at great speed over water while soaking wet. Fishing from such craft is awkward. Even drinking on them presents problems, especially where the bulky favored beverage of the sporting masses, beer, is concerned.

The abuse of public lands during this long fiesta of off-roading has led to a crisis of ethics and law. Of the 262 million acres under the federal Bureau of Land Management, 93 percent is open to off-road riding machines. Of 155 national forests, only two are off limits to off-roaders. Regulation of snowmobiles, ATVs, and dirt bikes on public lands has consistently failed in the face of lobbying by corporations who make these toys and of the peremptory claims of rights by those who use them. In a nation of outsourced blue-collar jobs, shrinking incomes, vanishing medical insurance,

In this new era, coming soon to a 21st-century region near you, the formerly industrial nations will have a great deal of trouble keeping the lights on, getting around, and feeding their people. Vocational niches by the hundreds will vanish, while the need to make up for a failing industrial agriculture, with all its oil-and-gas inputs, will require a revived agricultural working class in substantial numbers. This is in effect a peasantry, and the word itself obviously carries unappetizing overtones, especially among those who used to be certain that the perfection of both human nature and human society was at hand. It all seemed that way, I suppose, in the early 1960s, when the United Auto Workers union was setting up vacation camps along the Michigan lakes, and President Kennedy promised to put a man on the moon before the decade ended, and the doctrine of mutually assured destruction kept a sort of peace among the great military powers, and dad drove home from the Pontiac showroom with a new GTO, which his son, Buddy, used to cruise the strip on Friday nights while “Born to Be Wild” rang out of the radio and out into the warm, soporific San Fernando night.

All over but the keening for our soon-to-be-lost machine world. We'll have to find new satisfactions now looking inward and reaching out with our limbs to those around us to discover what they are finding inward and outward about themselves. We'll certainly find music there, and dancing, and perhaps some fighting, and we will still have the means to make bases and balls and sticks for hitting them and gloves for catching them and twilight evenings in the meadow to play in. Amid a great stillness. With the moon rising. ■

James Howard Kunstler is the author, most recently, of The Long Emergency.

THE WILL TO POWER ITSELF WILL PROBABLY BE SUBDUED BY SOMETHING MORE ELEMENTAL: A WILL TO STAY WARM, CLEAN, AND WELL NOURISHED.

adjacent to the populous Los Angeles basin. While it has persisted in its limited milieu, dune-buggy culture never quite recovered socially from its association with the murderous doings of Charles Manson and his “family.” The dirt-bike phenomenon also came out of California, but evolved quickly from an off-road work and play vehicle to the dirt-bike tracks of competitive racing, where it gave young men a way to channel surplus testosterone by winning trophies and cash. Ironically, wilderness-trail areas around the suburbs have lately been taken over by non-motorized mountain bikes, which are causing plenty of destruction in their own right.

The jet-ski is perhaps the most baroque and arguably the last in the line of such dedicated leisure vehicles, being

rising fuel and heating costs, and net-zero personal savings, the anxiety level of the struggling classes has to be appeased politically, and one way to minimize the current cost of that is to charge it off to posterity and the public interest.

Where does this leave us as we enter the post-cheap-oil world and eventually a world altogether without recoverable fossil fuels? You could say up a cul-de-sac in a rusted GMC Denali without a fill-up. Or in a society that will have to get its thrills and satisfactions in other ways, involving fewer prosthetic projections of our will to power. The will to power itself will probably be subdued by something more elemental: a will to stay warm, clean, and well nourished in the era of post-oil-and-gas hardship and turbulence we are entering.

The Fire Next Time

Neocons begin their march toward Tehran.

By Wayne Madsen

IRAN'S RECENT DECISION to break the security seals on its key uranium enrichment facility in Natanz has confirmed the worst fears of intelligence agencies, foreign ministries, military commands, and corporate risk-analysis shops around the globe. For months, intelligence officials have been scratching their heads about the intentions of the United States and Iran over the nuclear issue. The indications and warnings (I&W) were sketchy at best. Now they are becoming more sharply focused and worrisome.

During the Cold War, U.S. and allied analysts scanned every bit of intelligence data and every line in Soviet-bloc newspaper, magazine, and professional-journal articles looking for anything that might indicate the military intentions of the ultra-secretive Soviet leadership. Now the same takes place in countries around the world with regard to the objectives of the guarded Bush administration and the unpredictable Mahmoud Ahmedinejad regime in Iran.

As of this writing, there is some behind-the-scenes maneuvering by the European Union, Russia, China, and pragmatists in the Bush administration and Iran to defuse the crisis. Responsible parties are looking to the UN Security Council to weigh in with specific requirements for Iran concerning its nuclear program. But according to U.S. and Middle East diplomats, there is also a fierce debate within the Bush administration between those who want to work within the UN and European Union framework to impose sanctions

on Iran, those who want a limited strike to take out a few key Iranian nuclear sites to delay Iran's nuclear-weapons program, and those in the neocon camp who want to carpet bomb Iran with conventional and tactical nuclear weapons. In a limited strike, the Natanz uranium site, the heavy-water plant and radioisotope facility in Arak, and the Uranium Conversion Facility in Isfahan are likely targets.

President Ahmedinejad has decided to shore up his radical fundamentalist Islamist base against the reformists in the Iranian parliament and the more conservative pragmatists who surround former President Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Rafsanjani. His provocative rhetoric about denying the occurrence of the Holocaust in Europe, that Israel is a "tumor" that should be removed from the Middle East map and transferred to Europe, and wishing for the death of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon after his second stroke are all designed to play to the young and increasingly radicalized Iranian unemployed who helped propel the one-time university professor into office.

Supreme Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, himself no stranger to provocative statements intended to rile the West, is nonetheless alarmed about the Iranian president's statements in the midst of a showdown with the International Atomic Energy Agency, European Union, and United States over Iran's nuclear program. For that reason, Khamenei appointed Ahmedinejad's

rival, Rafsanjani, to chair the Expediency Council, an entity given greater powers by the Supreme Ayatollah to check the excesses of Ahmedinejad and his radical base.

But that may not be enough to prevent the brewing storm. The neoconservatives in Washington and Israel did not help the situation when, after Ahmedinejad's election, they flooded friendly media outlets with bogus "evidence" that the new Iranian president was one of the U.S. embassy hostage-takers in Tehran in 1979 and that he was a roving assassin who murdered an Iranian Kurdish leader in Vienna in 1989. To further aggravate the situation, the neocons persuaded the Bush administration to deny Ahmedinejad a visa to address the UN General Assembly last September.

Israeli actions are also worrying intelligence analysts. According to the *Times* of London, in mid-December Sharon ordered his elite Special Forces Unit 262 and his air force's strategic 69 Squadron to be prepared to strike Iranian uranium-enrichment facilities by the end of March 2006. Israel has first- and second-strike capabilities against key Iranian nuclear targets.

A few days after issuing his order, Sharon suffered a mild stroke followed by a more serious debilitating stroke a few weeks later. His centrist Kadima party colleague, Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, will now face pressure from the Likud party, the party that Sharon helped form but from which he bolted over the right-wing extremism of former Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to take action against Iran alone or with the help of the United States.

At the same time Sharon was ordering Israeli military preparations for an Iran attack, a flurry of U.S. leaders descended upon Turkey. In December, FBI Director Robert Mueller presented Turkish intelligence chiefs "evidence" of Iranian backing for Kurdish Worker's Party guerrillas operating in Turkey. After revelations about the bogus intelligence proffered by the United States prior to the Iraq invasion, Turkish officials were skeptical. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a member of the Islamist-oriented Justice and Development Party and he has maintained cordial, albeit not close, relations with Tehran. Erdogan has also become a close friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia has hundreds of technicians working at Iranian nuclear sites, and Putin has strongly warned against any U.S. military action against Iran.

Also visiting Turkey in rapid succession were CIA Director Porter Goss and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Turkish press reports stated that Goss brought three dossiers to Ankara suggesting Iran was bent on acquiring nuclear weapons, that it supported terrorist activities against Turkey by the PKK and al-Qaeda, and that Turkey should be prepared for a U.S. dual assault on both Iran and Syria. On Dec. 23, the German DDP wire service reported that Goss asked Turkey for logistics and intelligence support for a 2006 military strike on Iran.

Subsequently, the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* reported that NATO intelligence sources confirmed that the United States told its NATO allies to be prepared for U.S. military actions against Iran. At the same time, Turkish army chief of staff Gen. Yasar Buyukanit was summoned to the Pentagon and told much the same thing.

As in Iran, there are factions within the Bush administration urging caution. Similar to the conservative pragmatists headed by Rafsanjani, a group of pragmatists mainly surrounding Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, while publicly harsh on Iran and encouraging the rattling of the military sabers, are quietly backing the European Union Three—Britain, France, and Germany—and Security Council in negotiating a peaceful resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue and fully opening

Russia and China are shoring up their mutual defense relations along with the former Soviet Central Asian states. Last year, Uzbekistan ordered the United States to vacate its military bases in the country, replacing the Americans with Russians. In early December, Iran held a large military exercise at Bandar Abbas on the Gulf.

December also brought news of increased military activity at U.S. bases that would be involved in an attack on Iran. According to Army sources, the

THE PENTAGON ORDERED THE LARGE U.S. ARMY AVIATION TRAINING COMMAND AT FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA TO BE PREPARED FOR THE INFLUX OF SOME 50,000 TRAINEES, WHO WOULD BE DEPLOYED FOR IRANIAN COMBAT OPERATIONS.

Iranian nuclear facilities to UN inspectors. However, neocon war hawks like Michael Ledeen and Richard Perle, supported by their friends in the Pentagon and White House, have other ideas for Iran and Syria.

According to Polish intelligence sources, Poland's new defense minister, neocon American Enterprise Institute alumnus Radek Sikorski, promised Bush administration officials his nation's diplomatic support within NATO and the EU in the event of a U.S. strike on Iran. Sikorski is a one-time Polish Solidarity leader and former British journalist who worked for such neocon stalwarts as *National Review* and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

On the other side of the Eurasian land mass, Russia, China, and India, which all maintain close relations with Iran—China relies on Iran for 17 percent of its increasingly important oil imports—held an unprecedented joint military exercise at the end of December called Indira 2005. Through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,

Pentagon ordered the large U.S. Army aviation training command at Fort Rucker, Alabama to be prepared for the influx of some 50,000 trainees, including civilian contractors, who would be deployed for Iranian combat operations. There was also substantial activity at Hurlburt Field in Florida, the home of the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command and another key element in an attack on Iran. From California there were reports of live-fire training exercises at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twenty Nine Palms, an area that closely resembles some of the desert and mountainous terrain in Iran.

On Sept. 20, 2002, the Bush administration unveiled its National Security Strategy, a new military doctrine that called for pre-emptive military strikes against nations with weapons of mass destruction who rejected multilateral arms-control regimes. This doctrine followed the issuance of the Nuclear Posture Review in January 2002, which spelled out conditions for the use of America's some 1,500

tactical nuclear weapons against the nuclear stockpiles of such “rogue” nations as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, and North Korea, in addition to nuclear superpowers Russia and China.

Intelligence analysts worry that these doctrines make the unthinkable very likely: the use of tactical nuclear weapons against underground Iranian nuclear facilities. It is noteworthy that the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Underground Facility Analysis Center recently hired a number of new analysts to scrutinize satellite and other reconnaissance photos of Iranian military sites.

Oil companies are also concerned about U.S. military intentions in the region. They complain that information from the State Department, the U.S. military, and intelligence agencies ranges from non-useful to partial to deceptive. Asian nations are concerned about the effects that a tactical nuclear strike on Iranian nuclear facilities would have for the Indian Ocean region and East Asia considering the onset of late Spring monsoon weather and the effects of rain-borne radioactive fallout. Still recovering from the effects of the devastating December 2005 tsunami and worried about avian flu, Asia can ill-afford to deal with fallout from an attack on Iranian nuclear sites.

Those who remember the 1983 movie “War Games” will recall how every nuclear war-gaming scenario ultimately resulted in all-out global thermonuclear warfare. The I&W confronting intelligence analysts and war gamers around the world about a U.S.-Iran military confrontation conclude with equally sobering scenarios. ■

Wayne Madsen is a Washington-based investigative journalist. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and worked for the National Security Agency during the Reagan administration.

It is an axiom to “follow the money” in terrorist investigations,

but in doing so, Scotland Yard’s inquiry into the bombing of London’s transportation system last July has made a startling discovery. One of the four bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan, who worked as a part-time teacher, was the principal financier of the attacks that killed 52 and injured hundreds. The total cost of the attacks is estimated to have been less than £1000, or \$1,750. That only such a small sum was needed and that the money was raised legitimately, through normal employment, calls into question the assumption that the most effective way to identify and arrest terrorist cells is through monitoring their financing. The last major terrorist action that was funded by al-Qaeda directly was the 9/11 attack in New York and Washington. The bombing of the transportation system in Madrid in 2003, which was also successful and killed 191, was locally financed by the terrorists themselves, most of whom were living illegally in Spain. Likewise, the bombing of the nightclubs in Bali in 2002 that killed 202 were carried out by local terrorists using their own resources.



The Scotland Yard inquiry also learned that there’s real money to be made in fish and chips.

Shehzad Tanweer, one of the bombers, left behind a bank account containing more than £120,000 (\$210,000). Tanweer, a Briton of Pakistani descent who blew up himself and seven others on a subway car near Aldgate Station, was only 22 years old and worked as an assistant in his father’s fish and chips shop in Leeds. In spite of rigorous investigation, the police were unable to prove that any of the money came from illegal sources and were even able to confirm that taxes had been paid on the income. The authorities have turned over the money in the account to Tanweer’s closest relative, his father. Britain has no law making it possible for the estates of killers like Tanweer to go as compensation to the families of their victims.



Both Saudi Arabia and Egypt have become alarmed by the possible regional consequences of the deteriorating situation in Syria.

The two countries have begun to co-ordinate their diplomatic positions on the issue of the United Nations investigation of Lebanese politician Rafik Hariri’s murder and are sending emissaries to convince President Bashar Assad that he needs to respond positively to demands for co-operation. The Saudi intelligence service has been tracking developments and is particularly concerned about the growing Syrian dependence on Iran as its only reliable supporter in the region. The Egyptians believe that Syria, backed into a corner, could easily use its resources to instigate a new civil war in Lebanon to take the heat off itself. The prospects are that Lebanon will remain a fairly dangerous playground for the immediate future with Hezbollah, supported by both Iran and Syria, continuing to stir up trouble, especially on the Israeli border area by means of rocket attacks. More murders of Lebanese perceived as anti-Syrian activists can also be expected.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Glory Road*]

Basketball As It Wasn't

By Steve Sailer

AT LEAST SINCE 1967's Best Picture-winning "In the Heat of the Night," in which Rod Steiger's bigoted Southern sheriff and Sidney Poitier's angry Northern detective reluctantly team up to solve a murder, movies aimed at guy audiences have often astutely promoted racial harmony not as an end in itself, but as the most efficient way for real men to work together for important manly goals. A canonical illustration is the Jerry Bruckheimer-produced 2000 hit "Remember the Titans," in which the black and white football players at a tense newly integrated Virginia high school in 1971 learn to play as a team to win the big game.

Bruckheimer's new basketball movie "Glory Road" purports to be similar. Yet this story of the 1966 Texas Western Miners, the first squad to win the NCAA championship game with an all-black starting line-up, actually exemplifies more unsettling historical trends: the beginning of the *de facto* re-segregation of basketball and of the triumph of recruiting over coaching.

Josh Lucas, who exhibited ornery charm as Reese Witherspoon's redneck husband in "Sweet Home Alabama," gruffly plays new coach Don Haskins, who in 1965 brings to the benighted Southern school—now the U. of Texas at El Paso—the radical idea of recruiting

blacks. Although his seven Northern newcomers are the victims of racist violence and vandalism, they persevere to the NCAA Final, where they confront august coach Adolph Rupp and his mighty all-white Kentucky team, backed by their Confederate flag-waving fans. To make a civil-rights statement, Haskins chooses to play only African-Americans. Their astonishing victory finally opens the doors to black basketball players.

Unfortunately, that paragraph is mostly Hollywood hooey.

For example, it was 1961 when Haskins arrived in El Paso, which is so far from Fort Sumter that it's west of Denver, and Texas Western already had three black players. In the 1966 Final, Haskins didn't bench his white and Latino players as a political gesture—he'd barely played them all season. Not only was there no violence, but relatively few fans noticed he'd started five blacks in the 1966 Final—after all, three blacks had started for CCNY's championship team way back in 1950—until 25 years later when *Sports Illustrated* mythologized the game as an epochal triumph over racism.

Because college sports are more decentralized than professional leagues, they had never been fully segregated and thus lack national desegregation milestones like Jackie Robinson breaking big-league baseball's color line in 1947. Indeed, at UCLA before World War II, Robinson himself had starred in basketball, football, track, baseball, golf, and swimming.

By the mid-'60s, blacks were playing virtually everywhere except the South, where white boosters were denying themselves victories by insisting on all-white teams.

From today's perspective, the remarkable story in 1966 was not Texas Western's triumph but how far Rupp got with

such a physically inferior Kentucky team. "Rupp's Runts" were so short that they had to use 6'-4" Pat Riley, the future NBA coaching legend, for the opening center-jump.

Kentucky's old-school coach Rupp was called the "Baron of Bluegrass" because more than 80 percent of his players were Kentuckians. Yet he molded these local lads into four NCAA winners. Rupp thought it unseemly to pester high-school stars to accept valuable scholarships. When Rupp unsuccessfully tried to sign big Wes Unseld to be his first black player in 1964, the future Hall-of-Famer was offended that Rupp paid only one visit to his home.

In 2006, Rupp's faith in nurture over nature seems hopelessly outdated. The younger Haskins, in contrast, scoured distant cities for superior black talent rather than cultivate El Paso's white and Mexican players.

Today, African-Americans outnumber white Americans in the NBA by an order of magnitude. Yet has American basketball improved by evolving from integrated to overwhelmingly black? In 1992, the two-thirds black Olympic "Dream Team" thrilled the world with its overwhelming virtuosity. But by the 2004 Olympics, the all-black American squad of squabbling, gangsta-rap-loving NBA stars lost to Argentina, Puerto Rico, and Lithuania.

As entertainment, "Glory Road" offers respectable family fare, with a strong, amusing first half. Eventually, however, the script locks into the well-worn grooves of the inspirational sports movie genre and loses its distinctiveness. Also, the decision to focus on all seven black players was a mistake. Audiences find it hard to keep straight more than four characters of the same sex, age, and race. ■

"Glory Road" is PG-rated for some bad words.

BOOKS

[*Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*, Robert Dreyfuss, Metropolitan Books, 370 pages]

The Devils We Knew

By Leon Hadar

THE TWILIGHT YEARS of the Cold War were a lot of fun for guys like me who imagined that killing a few commies was kind of cool, especially if you could cover it from the safety of Washington. Think of us as "Chickenhawks: The First Generation." So there I was, on a cold but sunny day in Washington, Feb. 11, 1985, a young reporter standing on the White House lawn. And like Dean Acheson and Robert Kagan—*vive la différence*—I was Present at the Creation.

Sam Donaldson's toupee was blocking my view as I witnessed history. The Leader of the Democratic West, Custodian of the U.S. Constitution, and a former gay divorcee—"gay" like in the famous Fred Astaire movie—was schmoozing with a Muslim King, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Arabia, the ruler of a medieval theocracy where gay men—"gay" as in "Brokeback Mountain"—were stoned during lunch breaks. The two were proclaiming their commitment to shared ideals and pledging their support for Muslim guerrillas fighting an atheistic Evil Empire. Opposites attract. And love was in the air.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to express admiration for the responsible manner in which Saudi Arabia has conducted its economic affairs," was the way President Ronald Reagan welcomed King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz. "King Fahd and other Saudi leaders, conscious of the global impact of their financial and economic decisions, have earned our

respect and gratitude. Their many humanitarian contributions touch us deeply, as well," Reagan said. Yes, indeed. Thanks for that 1973 oil embargo.

And then, like in the final scene from "Casablanca," when Rick and Captain Renault decide to join the Free French to fight the Nazis—Renault even throws a bottle of Vichy water into the bin—Reagan turned toward his new pal Fahd and asserted that the two were now blood brothers. "The people of the United States share with the people of Saudi Arabia a deep moral outrage over the continuing aggression and butchery taking place in Afghanistan," Reagan declared. "The citizens of the Western democracies and the Muslim world, by all that they believe to be true and just, should stand together in opposition to those who would impose dictatorship on all of mankind," he said, suggesting that we were in a midst of a Clash of Civilizations pitting all Christians, Muslims, and Jews against those nonbelievers in the Kremlin. "Marxist tyranny already has its grip on the religious freedom of the world's fifth largest Muslim population. This same grip strangles the prayers of Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike. We all worship the same God. Standing up to this onslaught, the people of Afghanistan, with their blood, courage, and faith, are an inspiration to the cause of freedom everywhere." And

the young chickenhawks who in 1985 were watching cartoons instead of following Sam Donaldson's reports probably imagine that my When-Ronny-Met-Abdul recollections are a "Saturday Night Live" parody. After all, at a time when the warblogs are warning us of the coming war of civilizations between the Judeo-Christian West and Islam, the notion that the leaders of the Abrahamic civilizations were once joined together in support of the ideological forerunners of today's "Islamofascists" sounds like a bad joke.

As Dreyfuss makes clear, it was certainly not a joke. It was all dead serious: like thousands of dead Soviet soldiers, hundred of thousands of dead Afghans, and eventually, on that tragic day of 9/11, more than 3,000 dead Americans. In short, it was the devil's game. And ironically or paradoxically, not only did some of the same radical Islamists that we had trained in Afghanistan mastermind the 9/11 attacks, Saudi citizens carried them out. As Dreyfuss sees it, the same kind of mindset and cast of characters that helped cement the alliance with the mujaheddin as part of the Cold War strategy and created the conditions for the blowback of 9/11 have been driving our policy of ousting secular Saddam Hussein and forming a partnership with the radical Shi'ites—who we are putting in power in Baghdad to assist us in spreading secular democracy in the

NOT ONLY DID SOME OF THE **SAME RADICAL ISLAMISTS THAT WE HAD TRAINED IN AFGHANISTAN MASTERMIND THE 9/11 ATTACKS**, SAUDI CITIZENS CARRIED THEM OUT.

then Ronny and Abdul started fading into the sunset, holding hands and on their way to the Khyber Pass. And bin Abdul Aziz threw that Stolichnaya bottle into the bin.

Those were the days when the Cross and the Crescent would shine together and overpower the Sickle and Hammer. And they were coming back to life 20 years later as I was reading Robert Dreyfuss's *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*. The Soviet Union is no more. And

Middle East even as we continue working with the same Saudi theocracy.

But forget about ironies or paradoxes, and welcome to the "Mullah Horror Show," where Dr. Frankenstein—played by British imperialists, State Department officials, CIA spooks, Cold War ideologues, and Israeli leaders—helped give life to and energize the monster that is now haunting us. Dreyfuss, providing a valuable history lesson to the ignorant chickenhawks, explains that U.S. officials "found political Islam

to be a convenient partner during each stage of America's empire-building project in the Middle East, from its early entry into the region to its gradual military encroachment, to its expansion into the on-the-ground military presence, and finally to the emergence of the United States as an army of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan."

The author, an investigative journalist who covers national security for several publications, provides a concise and readable historical account of the evolution of America's partnerships with radical Islamic groups and regimes. He describes the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt into a Pan-Islamic movement and the rise of Saudi Arabia as a promoter of its strict interpretation of Islam (Wahabbism), and he exposes the way the Americans—and earlier the British—used these and other players as part of a Cold War strategy to counter the power of secular nationalist and socialist

leaders, including Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and Iran's Mohammad Mossadegh, who challenged U.S. interests in the Middle East and in some cases allied themselves with the Soviet Union. In that context, that America teamed-up with the Saudis and the Pakistanis to help the Islamic guerrillas in Afghanistan evict the Soviets should be seen as part of a pattern: it made a lot of sense as way of inflicting a painful defeat on the Soviets. And from that perspective, it worked.

Dreyfuss isn't a Middle East scholar and the limited number of sources he utilizes to tell his story include English-language texts and interviews with former officials. That explains perhaps why his analysis of the Islamic political movements is somewhat shallow. At the same time, much of what he recounts, including the employment by the CIA of Islamic clerics to oust Mossadegh from power in 1953, the U.S. co-operation with members of the Muslim Brotherhood to weaken Nasser, and Israeli efforts to build up Hamas to counter the secular Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has been told before and is familiar to anyone with minimal knowledge of Middle East affairs.

And *Devil's Game* loses some of its punch when the author tries to do Big Picture conceptualizing and advance certain ideological themes. Dreyfuss is correct when he points to the costs involved in using the Muslim Brotherhood to counterbalance Nasserism and when he argues that American values are incompatible with the tenets of radical political Islam. But his romanticization of Nasser and the secular Arab nationalist movements and regimes is off the mark, as when he suggests that the "United States didn't need an alternative to Nasser—it ought to have embraced him, and helped him undermine the Islamic right," when he refers to Syria's unification with Egypt under Nasser's United Arab Republic as an "exciting experiment in unifying the Arab world," or when he decries free-market reforms as a plot against progress manufactured by "Economic Islamists." There was nothing "exciting"

in Nasser's Egypt, Assad's Syria, or Saddam's Iraq—as independent entities or as part of an Arab bloc—as far as Western interests or values were concerned. These were fascist-like military dictatorships with state-controlled economies that not unlike the Soviet Union proved to be failed experiments in political-social engineering. Western support was not the determining factor in explaining the rise of political Islam; it has emerged as a potent alternative mainly because of the bankruptcy of secular Pan-Arabism. If anything, Muslim countries like the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Lebanon, not to mention Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia, have thrived after they have moved to liberalize their economies.

But if the book lacks some depth and originality, it compensates for that by its success in demonstrating in a crisp and lively manner how a series of one-night stands with dubious characters in the Middle East didn't always advance American long-term interests and have given birth to a collection of anti-American baddies. Those Cold War-era affairs with the Islamists were motivated not by love but by realpolitik considerations and in some cases—evicting the Soviets out of Afghanistan—helped to checkmate the Kremlin. But with the end of the Cold War, America had an opportunity to end its many affairs in the Middle East and start the process of disengagement. Instead, the current spin-masters in the White House are choreographing new media events like the one I witnessed 20 years ago, starring another U.S. president and another devout Arab Muslim. But after reading the *Devil's Game*, we shouldn't project a sense of irony when our policies don't exactly have a happy ending. As they say in the Middle East, when you sleep at night with dogs, don't be surprised when you wake up with fleas. Or with the devil lying next to you. ■

Leon Hadar is a Cato Institute research fellow in foreign-policy studies and author, most recently, of Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East.

MOVING?

Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, www.amconmag.com. Click "subscribe" and then click "address change."

To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

The American Conservative
Subscription Department
P.O. Box 9030
Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

[*The Untied States of America: Polarization, Fracturing, and Our Future*, Juan Enriquez, Crown, 352 pages]

One Nation, Divisible

By Peter J. Lynch

"HOW MANY STARS, do you think, will be in the U.S. flag in fifty years?" This is the question posed by Juan Enriquez in *The Untied States of America*. If the fault lines in American society widen, will cities, states, or entire regions decide they would be better off charting their own course under a banner other than the Stars and Stripes? As Enriquez suggests, the outcome remains far from certain, but not for the reasons he thinks.

The CEO of a biotech venture-capital firm, Enriquez likens citizenship to "buying into a national brand." That word "buying" is key. Much like Thomas Friedman, he insists that, for the sake of competitiveness in the global marketplace, America ought to be a place where the world's best and brightest can come to strike it rich—those who perhaps aren't as gifted but will work hard picking fruit, building McMansions, slaughtering animals, and washing dishes are invited too. That's right, only by filling the country with all manner of unassimilated foreigners whose primary allegiance is to the Almighty Dollar can we prevent it from becoming "untied."

It's doubtful that Enriquez actually believes this nonsense, since he acknowledges that English-speaking Americans born in America don't have as much in common with one another as they once did. In fact, people in the blue states "have a lot more in common with Canadians than they do with those living in red states. They are, in general, wealthier, more liberal, more secular, pay more taxes, believe in some government ..." He illustrates this disconnect by comparing the hugely successful *Da Vinci Code* to the equally popular *Left*

Behind series; yet how many people have read both? When you can't relate to your fellow countrymen because they listen to talk radio instead of NPR, watch Fox News not CNN, and shop at Safeway rather than Trader Joe's, the odds are not good you'll identify with those who listen to "El Zol," watch Telemundo, and shop at the Latin American grocery.

These differences—while superficial—are nevertheless indicative of more serious divisions in the American body politic. What Enriquez doesn't seem to notice is how these divisions become exacerbated by the close quarters necessitated by the unitary political system. Witness the ferocity of the abortion, stem-cell research, or intelligent-design debates. This is in part due to the fact that almost everything is now a national issue. There was a time when the Kansas Board of Education could make decisions for the schoolchildren of Kansas without input from the Upper East Side. Not any more. The situation creates the perfect recipe for resentment of one's fellow citizens, particularly in light of the correlation between geographic and ideological proximity these days. Hatred of George W. Bush on the coasts and in big cities, for example, can transform into blanket animosity toward the Middle American yokels who foisted him upon the entire country.

To Enriquez's mind, any tension in America is attributable not to this phenomenon but to the Neanderthals who refuse to "buy into the national brand," which presumably entails climbing aboard the globalist, open-borders, multilingual bandwagon. For someone who unquestionably regards himself as a tolerant person, he doesn't have a lot of patience for those who feel their way of life is threatened by the brave new world's "knowledge economy" that so excites him and his colleagues in the biotechnology field.

Anyone with a strong metaphysical inclination that influences him beyond the cozy confines of his chosen house of worship also needs re-education in matters American, according to Enriquez. He claims the United States was better

off when it "made science its dominant religion." What a remarkable statement. In one sentence, the author makes his readers question his understanding not only of science and religion but history as well. Enriquez sees the unfortunate, heavy-handed politicking surrounding the premature death of Terri Schiavo at the insistence of her husband as evidence of an attempted theocratic plot perpetrated by hypocrites giving lip service to the sanctity of life. After all, President Bush signed off on the executions of a lot of criminals in Texas, and Bush's fellow Texan, Tom DeLay, "allowed his father to die in 1988 after a similar tragedy" to Mrs. Schiavo's.

Eventually, if a sizable segment of the American population persists in its mossbacked ignorance and fails to embrace every dubious scientific fad and Third World immigrant wholeheartedly, its more enlightened neighbors might begin to consider whether remaining tied to it is in their best interest. Enriquez realizes that the Northeast will most likely lead the drive for secession or devolution. Drawing on examples from across the globe, he shows that the impetus for devolution arises most often in wealthier regions, such as Northern Italy, Biafra, and Slovenia, whose inhabitants view their poorer, less sophisticated countrymen as dead weight. Although he overlooks the Second Vermont Republic movement, profiled by Bill Kauffman in the Dec. 19, 2005 issue of *TAC*, he does mention secessionist agitation in antebellum New England and that today Northeastern states pay far more into the U.S. Treasury than they get in return. However, it is not entirely outside the realm of possibility that, at the other end of the ideological spectrum, the people of a deeply God-fearing red state—maybe Utah or Alabama—will some day try to sever their ties to an increasingly godless federal government carefully scrubbed of the values they hold dear.

Secession may seem a somewhat drastic measure, and it really is. A vastly simpler solution can be found by restoring an aspect of American government

Missing Any Issues of The American Conservative?

Order today, and get a FREE copy of the first issue!

\$6 per issue postage paid.

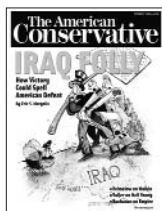
Please indicate quantity:

October 7, 2002

FREE Vol. 1, No. 1

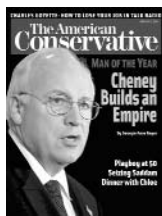
First Issue!

FREE with any paid order



December 2, 2002

___ Norman Mailer on Empire

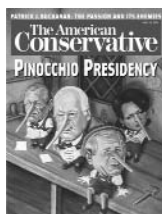


March 24, 2003

___ Whose War?

February 2, 2004

___ Cheney Builds an Empire



March 15, 2004

___ Gibson's Passion

April 26, 2004

___ Pinocchio Presidency

July 5, 2004

___ Reagan Commemorative Issue

See "Archive" at www.amconmag.com for a description of all issues

___ Other issue. Date _____

___ Other issue. Date _____

☐ **5 issues published in 2002**

☐ **All 24 issues published in 2003**

☐ **All 24 issues published in 2004**

FREE Vol. 1, No. 1 with paid order

Name _____

Please print

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

TAC60213

Send your order with payment to:

The American Conservative
1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120
Arlington, VA 22209

established by the founders that has fallen into disuse. Writing only a few years after World War II, Garet Garrett speculated that the masses' opposition to U.S. involvement in the conflagration prior to Pearl Harbor proved to the elite that they must conduct the country's foreign policy without any regard for the wishes of *hoi polloi*—or the Constitution. Something similar has happened with states' rights. Since a number of states misused their sovereignty to ensure blacks and whites remained separate and unequal, the federal government usurped many of the powers traditionally reserved to the states. The states' rights cause is now dismissed as unsuited to modern-day America, and anyone who makes a case for it is accused of secretly longing for a return to Jim Crow.

This is a shame because a truly federal system would solve a lot of the problems described by Enriquez. Arguing in support of this position, columnist Walter Williams wrote:

The best thing the president and Congress can do to heal our country is to reduce the impact of government on our lives. Doing so will not only produce a less divided country and greater economic efficiency but bear greater faith and allegiance to the vision of America held by our founders—a country of limited government.

The United States has not grown too big and unwieldy for its own good. Its government has. Instead of fighting each other tooth and nail for control of the federal government, why not simply restrict its powers to their traditional, and more importantly constitutional, level? States need not declare total independence; they just have to insist on their rights as semi-autonomous political entities—rights that they utilized once upon a time. This approach is not without its disadvantages, but it presents a viable middle course between the federal Leviathan's unconstitutional consolidation of power and a complete separation of uncertain amicability.

Curiously, Enriquez discusses neither the devolutionary option nor the constitutional debate over the possibility of secession or nullification, which would have been helpful seeing, as the last time Americans tried to dissolve the political bonds that kept them in the Union hundreds of thousands of them died violent deaths. Apparently he takes it for granted that, unlike in 1861, Washington will now let a state or even states secede peaceably, a very improbable prospect given the imperious nature of the contemporary American presidency. Ask the people of Iraq or Serbia how respectful our leaders are of the sovereignty of independent countries, even ones half a world away.

In the final pages of *The Untied States of America*, Enriquez imagines how the newly inaugurated female winner of the 2008 presidential election will approach her new job. He concludes that, in order to keep the United States from unraveling, she will embrace a vague set of policies eerily reminiscent of Bill Clinton's "Third Way" hokum, keeping in mind "one overarching priority: Make it unrewarding and uncomfortable for anyone, in the mainstream, to promote untying." It is a disappointing end to a disappointing book. All the same, Enriquez should be commended for tackling the subject at all. Traditional conservatives and libertarians can take heart that a moderately liberal establishment figure has written a book that recognizes the current path of the United States as inherently unsustainable, not because of some administration's ultimately peripheral environmental or trade policy but due to a more deep-rooted dysfunction of the American political system itself. Of course, moderately liberal types and their mania for centralized power bear much of the blame for that dysfunction in the first place. At the very least, Juan Enriquez has shown that perhaps a few of them are starting to grasp that something is rotten in these United (for now) States, and it's a bigger problem than George W. Bush. ■

Peter J. Lynch writes from Arlington, Virginia.

[*Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*, Jimmy Carter, Simon and Schuster, 213 pages]

Counsels of A Liberal Ex-President

By Chip Pitts

TO READERS of this magazine, Jimmy Carter may seem like the last person to whom one should look for moral leadership or foreign-policy guidance. And he admits that he is a better ex-president than he was a president. Critics perceived President Carter's leadership as vacillating between self-righteousness and timidity, political mismanagement of some issues and micromanagement of others. These faults were all on display at times during the Iranian hostage crisis.

In his post-presidential life, however, Carter has been a man who has put his faith into action. Not only has he written a series of books on the subject of "living faith," but he has regularly taken up his hammer to build homes for the poor—with Habitat for Humanity—among other good works.

Our Endangered Values is Carter's 20th book and the first that is overtly political. In it, Carter breaks with tradition to censure his most recent successor. As the unifying conceit for the book, Carter inveighs against a new, more intense fundamentalism that he says is taking over both religion and politics and melding them to the Republic's detriment. Note that this is not the classic Christian fundamentalism historically so prevalent in the South and which still may be found in small towns in Georgia, Arkansas, Alabama, or Louisiana, where there's a church on practically every street corner and people still visit each other when they're sick, make most important decisions locally, and cherish virtues including honesty, thrift, humility, and a healthy

skepticism about those in power, especially politicians. That may be a vanishing world, but it's where Carter still lives.

Carter's ethical and religious beliefs inform and take precedence over his political affiliation, and readers may be surprised to find that they agree with him on more than they might expect. For example, Carter disapproves of both abortion and homosexuality; like Vice President Cheney, he opposes gay marriage but would support states allowing civil unions for homosexuals. Carter reminds us, too, that adultery, fornication, and divorce are sins, and argues for a consistent respect for life, which, to be sure, for him means not only opposition to abortion but to the death penalty. Whether agreeing or disagreeing with Carter's specific positions, opponents and supporters alike will recognize that his faith is sincere and deep.

For that reason he distinguishes traditional religious and moral values, which he wants to conserve, from the sort of politicized fundamentalism he finds so disturbing. Instead of the church on every corner, he sees increasing polarization and vituperation.

INSTEAD OF **HONESTY, THRIFT, AND HUMILITY**, HE SEES **DUPLICITY**, PROFLIGATE GOVERNMENT **SPENDING**, AND **ARROGANCE**.

Instead of localism, he sees centralization. Instead of honesty, thrift, and humility, he sees duplicity, profligate government spending, and arrogance. The phenomenon may be illustrated by a somewhat shocking but humorous quote Carter includes in the book, though apparently not said in jest, from his co-religionist Pat Robertson: "You say you're supposed to be nice to the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and the Methodists and this, that and the other thing. Nonsense. I don't have to be nice to the spirit of the Antichrist."

"Omen V: The Episcopalians"? Some other denominations may have teased Episcopalians for considering the Ten Commandments to be the Ten Sugges-

tions, but few associate them with the Antichrist.

Let's say, however, that you disagree with Carter on this and other points. Why bother reading his book? Because if Carter is right, this new and more virulent fundamentalism and its spillover effects are insidiously jeopardizing not only the basic American values that have provided the framework for this country's unparalleled prosperity and success: they may also be threatening the security and future of America itself.

Carter's argument to this effect is most compelling in his chapters dealing with foreign policy, human rights, and pre-emptive war. In his Farewell Address, Carter said, "America did not invent human rights ... human rights invented America." And this insight has deep roots. The Declaration of Independence was triggered by the litany of tyrannical abuses by King George, including "general warrants" under which British customs officials would enter colonists' homes at will to collect taxes and customs duties, violating the sanctity of an English subject's home that had existed from time immemorial. Unlike the British during the Revolu-

tionary War, George Washington refused to execute prisoners summarily. Similar ideals are reflected in America's founding documents, including the guarantees in the Constitution and Bill of Rights for limited government, protection for the Great Writ of Habeas Corpus, due process of law, and equal protection of the law. From the outset, this historically unique commitment to individual rights has granted the United States the competitive advantage of enormous magnetic appeal, part of what Harvard's Joseph Nye and others have termed "soft power."

Yet, Carter argues, the world has watched as these values have been casually disregarded by the current

administration. Habeas corpus—requiring the arresting officer to “have the body” produced in order to be charged—affords one of the most ancient safeguards against tyranny. As Carter notes, however, the Bush administration and uncritical allies in Congress have repeatedly undermined this principle—even failing to implement a Supreme Court decision reaffirming habeas corpus for the Guantanamo detainees and presumably the U.S. citizens held until recently without charge as “enemy combatants.” Similarly, the Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed the English common law principle that a man’s home is his castle, subject to special protections. Yet the Bush administration rushed through the Patriot Act with its provisions allowing secret home searches and property confiscations not merely in exceptional cases where the evidence might disappear or the suspect might flee but as the new rule. These extraordinary powers to

torture—“are similar to those of abusive regimes that we have historically condemned.” And while the “inevitable political and economic competition with China” will only grow, he notes that we are only now beginning to realize the degree to which China, of all countries, is rushing to build relationships and is trying to fill the vacuum created in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East by myopic U.S. policies.

Although Carter details a long list of invasions of fundamental rights at home and abroad, ranging from the post-9/11 roundups of Arabs and Muslims to the CIA’s secret detention centers illegally declared off-limits even to the International Red Cross, Carter’s greatest incredulity is reserved for the Bush administration’s practice of torture at Abu Ghraib and other sites—as described in Pentagon reports as well as those from Amnesty International and the Red Cross. He cites the finding by Physicians

Torture techniques, justified on grounds of pre-empting terrorist attacks, are linked in Carter’s mind to the unprecedented Bush policy of pre-emptive war. Carter is no pacifist; he was a career naval officer with more military service under his belt than any 20th-century president except Eisenhower. But he favors the historic U.S. preference for diplomacy over force, instead of the United States sending “a signal that violence [has] become a much more acceptable alternative to peaceful negotiations in resolving differences.”

Carter quotes extensively from his *New York Times* op-ed published shortly before the Iraq invasion, which argued that the action failed classic Christian “just war” criteria, including that war be used only as a last resort after all other means are exhausted. He cites evidence that the Iraq War, belatedly justified in the name of democracy, has ironically allowed a crackdown on democracy activists and triggered “a general retreat by their governments from previous human rights commitments, [with] a danger of setting back democratic movements by decades.” Invoking statements from CIA Director Porter Goss that Iraq has become a training ground for terrorists, as well as National Counterterrorism Center reports that serious international terror incidents more than tripled in 2004 and polls showing approval of the U.S. internationally to be at all time lows, he concludes that the Iraq War “has actually increased the terrorist threat.”

Like Jimmy Carter the man, this book is far from perfect: slow to gather steam, marked by the occasional grammatical or stylistic lapse and sometimes tendentious prose. But in this personal plea, Carter helps the American people understand both the importance of their fundamental values and the imperative to recover them for the sake of the Republic. ■

Chip Pitts is a lecturer in law at Stanford Law School and board president of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee.

HE CITES EVIDENCE THAT **THE IRAQ WAR**, BELATEDLY JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF DEMOCRACY, HAS IRONICALLY **ALLOWED A CRACKDOWN ON DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS.**

spy on and invade the rights of American citizens, without the need to show factual links to terrorists or crimes, have made strange bedfellows of Carter and such conservative groups as Bob Barr’s Patriots to Restore Checks and Balances and the Free Congress Foundation.

As a president who emphasized human rights in U.S. foreign policy and elaborated on the benefits of soft power in speeches well before the concept became known as such, Carter cannot conceal his sadness at seeing that moral power ebb away. He cites evidence of a global “erosion of human rights protection” stemming from U.S. pressure on other nations to adopt similarly “regressive counterterrorism policies that lead to the undermining of democratic principles and the rule of law.” As he laments, “[s]ome of our actions”—extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention,

for Human Rights that the United States has engaged in “systematic psychological torture” since at least 2002 and quotes the eloquent condemnation and call for an independent bipartisan investigative commission by President George H.W. Bush’s personal physician, Dr. Burton J. Lee III. To make his case even stronger, Carter could have added the behind-the-scenes objections from Colin Powell and top military lawyers to waiving the Geneva Conventions and current military defense counsels’ protests at ongoing abuses. Carter did manage to include, however, timely references to Sen. John McCain’s legislation reaffirming the illegality of torture and “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment”—and Vice President Cheney’s strenuous lobbying efforts against the legislation and President Bush’s threat to veto it.

A Night Out With the Kennedys



Late in the fall of 1974, the senior senator from Massachusetts, accompanied by his nephew, future Congressman Joe Kennedy, arrived in

Athens as guests of the newly installed—following the collapse of the military junta—and democratically elected government of Constantine Karamanlis. At the time, I was working as a stringer for UPI and as the Middle East correspondent for *National Review*.

Just before the Kennedy pair landed, a message from one William van den Heuvel, father of *The Nation's* present editor, was passed to me from the Ministry of Information. The Kennedys were eager to meet with me once the formal government stuff had been dealt with. Being familiar with the long homosexual history of the Kennedys, I immediately understood what they were after, so I asked my very pretty American girlfriend of the time whether she had a couple of friends who would like to have a drink with a couple of Kennedys. Did she ever, was her eager response.

We arranged to meet around midnight at the Grande Bretagne Hotel, where Ted and Joe were staying as guests of the Greek government. One of the girls, the daughter of a prominent Greenwich, Connecticut attorney, was called Anita C. She brought along another cute American who was also spending a year studying in the birthplace of selective democracy. When we met with Ted and Joe, I suggested we go to a trendy nightclub called 9 Muses, but Ted said he preferred to stay behind with Anita and then join us later. No one seemed to mind, so I went on ahead with Joe, my girl, and his new acquaintance.

We did not get off to a good start. Joe lit a joint in the taxi despite my warnings

that under Greek law possessing a single joint could land one in jail for a minimum of 12 months. (It has been changed since.) I was outvoted, and the evening passed rather hazily, if you know what I mean.

Then the trouble began in earnest. Around five in the morning, a hysterical Anita rang my house accusing Ted Kennedy of all sorts of things involving drugs and booze. I asked her to calm down, but she was adamant that he had done her wrong and told me she would ring her father in the States.

Next day I listened to her story, which went as follows: No sooner had we left, the senator and Anita began petting, as they say, and then, according to Anita, Kennedy produced a plastic bag full of

of all, I had been responsible for arranging the evening. But, as I told Anita's father, a U.S. senator and his nephew were not exactly rough trade or gangsters. Or were they? My other problem was that Anita was the only witness. It was her word against Ted's. But having seen how reckless Joe had been, I decided to put it on the UPI wire.

John Rigos, however, the UPI bureau chief and one of the nicest men I have ever known, decided against it. Not enough proof. So I waited three years and wrote about it as soon as I got my London *Spectator* column. No Kennedy ever spoke to me again, which was the only positive thing to emerge from the mess they created in their one night in Athens. The American press ignored the story. So what else is new?

This warmed-over stuff came back to me as I was reading David Brooks's column about the Alito confirmation hearings. Poor people like Sam Alito

POOR PEOPLE LIKE **SAM ALITO GREW UP RESPECTING THE LAW**. PRIVILEGED, ENTITLED, AND DISRESPECTFUL PEOPLE LIKE THE **KENNEDYS COULDN'T CARE LESS**.

amyl nitrate and proceeded to pop it. The effect was like nothing she had felt before. She became very dizzy and confused and almost threw up, and then saw a suddenly naked Ted Kennedy looming towards her. She began screaming and became hysterical. But once she started screaming, he immediately stopped, got dressed, and had the cop standing watch outside his apartment take her home. End of story.

But not really. Anita had called her father. He had jumped on the first plane and was on his way to Athens. The Kennedys had left that morning for Rome, to visit the pope, of all people, which put me in a hell of a position. First

grew up respecting the law. Privileged, entitled, and disrespectful people like the Kennedys couldn't care less.

Although I'm no one to talk where drugs are concerned, at least I've paid for my past sins. Ted Kennedy has not, nor have others like Joe and Robert Jr. And don't forget, this incident took place five years after Chappaquiddick, where Ted left a young woman to drown while he pretended to be asleep in his room rather than go for help. People like Ted Kennedy insult our sense of decency when they maliciously assert that Alito does not care for black Americans or the poor. Or young women, for that matter. ■

We Hate to Say We Told You So...

October 7, 2002

“Though U.S. forces could quickly defeat Iraq’s regular army in the field, there is a high risk of prolonged urban guerilla warfare and great numbers of civilian casualties.”

October 7, 2002

“Once in Baghdad, how do we get out? ... To destroy Saddam’s weapons, to democratize, defend, and hold Iraq together, U.S. troops will be tied down for decades.”

October 21, 2002

“... the administration really does not know whether there is a clear and imminent threat from Iraq, cannot prove that one exists, and resists proposals for finding out because the answer might undermine its plans for war.”

October 21, 2002

“As one senior Ba’ath party official said to me, ‘When the Americans say there will be dancing in the streets if Saddam is toppled, they are simply reading from a book they have written themselves.’”

December 2, 2002

“Wolfowitz presents Chalabi’s raw intelligence as fact. His boss Rumsfeld accepts the same unfiltered data and presents it with equal confidence in the more powerful Principals Committee. Vice President Cheney and his chief of staff I. Lewis Libby, another Wolfowitz protégé, lap it up, and the National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice lacks the personal confidence to challenge the formidable Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz axis.”

December 16, 2002

“There is no reason to think that fighting in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities will be a cakewalk.”

February 24, 2003

“Muslim extremists who sympathize with al-Qaeda but are not terrorists tell European journalists they are hoping the U.S. invades Iraq. ‘This will demonstrate once again that Muslims are being targeted and thus will allow them to rally Muslims to their point of view and recruit new militants,’ said leftist Algerian author and journalist Mohamed Sifaoui.”

February 24, 2003

“All Western European intelligence services... now agree that an invasion of Iraq would be not only a distraction from the war on terror but a catalytic agent for would-be jihadi terrorists from all over the Muslim world and from Muslim communities in the West.”

**The American
Conservative**
The Magazine for Thinking Conservatives

Subscribe at www.amconmag.com or call **800-579-6148**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED